

# Iowa and Abraham Lincoln

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Being Some Account of the Presidential Discussion  
and Party Preliminaries in Iowa

1856-1860

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*By* F. I. HERRIOTT

Professor Economics and Political Science  
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Truly yours,

F. I. Herriott

F. I. Herriott  
Professor

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# IOWA AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN

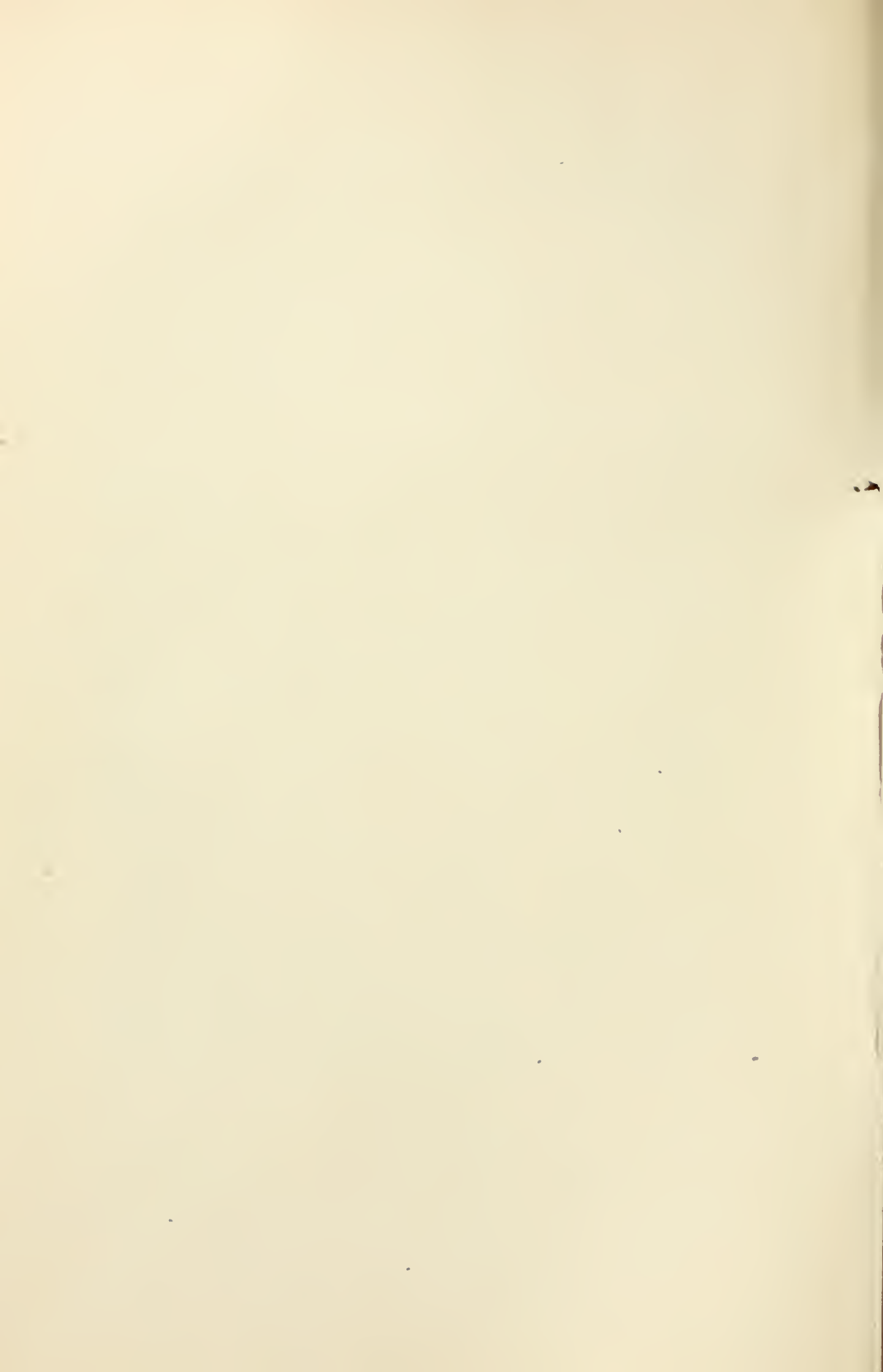
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1856-1860

*By* F. I. HERRIOTT

Professor Economics and Political Science  
Drake University

[Reprinted with Some Additions from *The Annals of Iowa*]



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## IOWA AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1856-1860

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### The Republican Preliminaries of the Presidential Campaign of 1860

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Consistency in conduct or continuity and substance in opinion are not virtues ordinarily accredited to politicians. Alike in academic discussion and in common parlance politicians are contemptuously described as mere weathervanes or flotsam that turns or tosses with the fitful currents of popular prejudice. Whether politicians are such or not they nevertheless indicate somewhat of the activity, direction, and intensity of the forces that rule. Moreover, if one studies more than the eddies and swirls of politics he must soon discover that the changeableness and contradiction that aggravate and confuse the casual onlooker are merely the surface phenomena of greater and deeper currents of powerful human interests that are always running heavily beneath the waves and white caps.

In practical politics, as in the physical world at large, action and reaction are equivalent. Political opinion that is efficient—that controls government, determining legislation and administration—is a reflex and resultant. Political chiefs, who are leaders, at once lead and are led. They dominate only as they are dominated by the major influences of their domicile and province. They are influential and successful in so far as they receive, express and direct the common opinion of their clans or section and co-ordinate it with the decisive opinion of other chiefs of other regions within the circuit of the franchise. The masterful leader is he who first clearly discerns the fact that underlies and overtops all others in public interest, who cleaves to it, avoids or eliminates irrelevant and contrary considerations and by lucid and persuasive speech coerces many minds into common opinion or by strategy and



tactics unifies miscellaneous elements into a compact forward moving force against a common opposition.

In the national republican convention that nominated Abraham Lincoln for the presidency in 1860 the votes of the delegates from Iowa on the first ballot were widely distributed. They were cast for six different candidates—Edw. Bates of Missouri, Salmon P. Chase and John McLean of Ohio, Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, and Wm. H. Seward of New York. On the third and decisive ballot Iowa's delegates continued to be divided, voting for Chase, Lincoln and Seward.<sup>1</sup> The division of sentiment among the Iowans was notable for no other northern or Free state had its quota of votes so badly "split up." One southern or Slave state, Kentucky in a similar fashion scattered its vote among as many candidates. Such division indicated one or the other of several facts—either strong stubborn personal preferences among the delegates for the various candidates, or huckstering and trading with a view to subsequent personal or party advantage for the Iowans; or the various votes reflected antecedent contradictory conditions in the cities and towns, in the townships and counties of the sections of the state whence the delegates from Iowa hailed—conditions which they represented.

In another place the writer has described at some length the various complexes of local conditions and forces between 1856 and 1860 that made uncertain the political course of Iowa on the eve of the presidential campaign of 1860.<sup>2</sup> The majorities by which the Republicans held possession of the state were meagre. The contentiousness of the Abolitionists, the "Americans," the Germans, and the Prohibitionists or "Teetotalers" was irrepressible. Moreover, the constant and increasing attacks upon the property rights of the slaveholders, the shock of John Brown's raid upon Harpers Ferry, had not only aroused the belligerency of the Negrophobists among the numerous Southerners in the Republican ranks in

<sup>1</sup>See *Proceedings of the First Three Republican National Conventions*—published by Chas. W. Johnson, pp. 149, 153.

<sup>2</sup>See *Annals of Iowa* (3d Series), Vol. VIII, 189-220: same reprinted with additions under title of "*Iowa and the First Nomination of Abraham Lincoln*," pp. 38-80.

Iowa but had increased the timidity of the commercial classes, then slowly recovering from the industrial depression following in the wake of the financial disasters of 1857. The Republican party's supremacy was maintained on a narrow margin that required the hardest and most systematic work to secure. Such conditions at home afford us what the logicians call the "efficient" causes of the obstinate differences in the preferences and actions of Iowa's delegates in the momentous decision at Chicago, May 18, 1860.

In what follows there will be traced the growth of opinion among the Republicans of the state respecting the Presidential nomination in 1860 in the preceding quadrennium so far as it may now be ascertained from the expressions of party leaders and party organs. Our examination will enable us to determine, in some part at least, whether the lack of harmony among the delegates from Iowa on the floor of the convention at Chicago reproduced actual differences of opinion among their partisan associates at home. Further, we may discover whether the conditions in Iowa and the conduct of the state's representatives differed materially from the character of the conditions and the course of opinion and party action in what was then called "the battle ground" states—namely, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey—whose delegates with preeminent wisdom by concert of action at the critical juncture decided the result at Chicago. Finally, such a review of the expressions of local partizan desires and preferences may enable us to determine whether the currents of opinion in Iowa which converged and culminated in that epoch-making decision were erratic and incoherent or clearcut, consistent and consolidated; whether personal preferences as to candidates or policies and principles were predominant in the party discussions and councils; whether the demands of the radicals were conceded or the consensus of the conservatives determined the result; whether Greeley's prediction, in February, 1860 that, "as it is in Iowa, so it will be elsewhere," was realized in May.

*1. Discussion Foreshadowed in 1855-1856.*

The nature of party opinion among the Republican leaders of Iowa, its consistency and continuity throughout the entire preliminaries of the National Convention of 1860 will be better appreciated if we view it in the light of expressions of Governor Grimes and Senator Harlan in 1855-1856 anent some of the candidates mentioned for the nomination of the opposition or Republican party in 1856.

Writing Senator Chase of Ohio in April 1855 Governor Grimes declared that "a very large part of the friends of freedom in Iowa would be glad to see you a candidate for the presidency. I am one of the number." He then adds: "I think there is too much asperity of feeling throughout the country to justify us in placing Mr. Seward forward as the Republican candidate, and, to confess the truth, I must say that I have a horror of New York politicians."<sup>1</sup> There is reason to think that if Governor Grimes could have decided the nomination on May 18, 1860 according to his personal preferences he would have cast his vote for Chase; but he was a statesman who knew well that personal inclinations and prejudices are not the decisive factors in politics.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke, chairman of Iowa's delegation to Chicago in 1860, was a delegate to the first National Convention in Philadelphia in 1856. Then, as later, he sought for his guidance the opinions of his party associates as to the strongest man for the nomination. Governor Grimes wrote him (April 3): "In regard to the November Election I am full of hope provided an entirely *new man* is nominated. I prefer Fremont to any other man named for this reason. We can not elect Mr. Seward or any other old politician against whom there are old chronic prejudices which you know are hard to be conquered. To build up and consolidate a new party we must have men who have not been before the people as politicians."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Salter's *Life of Jas. W. Grimes*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>2</sup>Letters (MSS.) of Dr. Wm. Salter and Mr. W. W. Baldwin of Burlington to the writer.

<sup>3</sup>The citation above (and other subsequently given, when not otherwise specified), is taken from MSS:—Correspondence and Memoranda in the Aldrich Collections in the Historical Department at Des Moines.

Mr. Clarke evidently inclined strongly to favor the nomination of N. P. Banks of Massachusetts, doubtless because of their "Americanistic" affiliations, for he asked Senator Harlan to sound the Speaker of the House and canvass his chances. In his reply written from Washington (April 21) Senator Harlan, after relating the results of his interview with Banks says: "But, Clarke, on the square will not the Iowa delegation go its death for Seward? I notice that Warren and Springer are among the delegates. Seward is a great man. One of the greatest the country has produced. The more I see of him the more firmly the conviction is riveted. But I am not certain that he is the strongest man. His hostility to the Americans, expressed so strongly hitherto, would weaken him." He then says of Judge McLean: "If he could be induced to take strong grounds fairly with us he could be elected;" and concludes with favorable mention of Colonel Fremont but doubts his chances of receiving the nomination.

The attitudes of the two leaders in 1856 remained constant throughout the succeeding four years. There are some significant facts to be noted in their expressions and kept in mind as we canvass succeeding developments. One leader regarded the selection of a Presidential candidate as a matter subject wholly to the superior exigencies of the political situation confronting the party on the eve of the campaign; the ambitions of party chiefs and the claims of personal friendships were considerations subordinate to the paramount necessity of Success for the Cause they would advance. The other leader, no less desirous of success, believed that the most conspicuous champion of the party should be nominated, even though sundry prudential reasons might suggest the elevation of some one of others less likely to arouse opposition; being impelled thereto by admiration of that champion's abilities and career and by staunch friendship growing out of close official associations. Further the dread of New York's politicians and fear that Mr. Seward's well known opposition to the Know-Nothing or American propaganda would put party success in jeopardy were potent considerations in 1856; and they were decisive in the formation of party opinion in 1860

*2. Iowa's Politicians and Mr. Lincoln in 1856.*

Two facts may here be noted. They may seem somewhat contradictory in their significance so far as concerns the subsequent course of Iowa's politicians but they are suggestive of the fact so generally unappreciated that on the morning of May 18, 1860 Abraham Lincoln was *not* "an Unknown."

At the first National Republican Convention in Philadelphia in 1856 Lincoln received 110 votes for Vice-President. Iowa's delegates it seems not only did not give him any votes but it appears they rather stubbornly refused to do so when the promoters of Lincoln's candidacy felt that they could expect some support because of either claims of neighborhood or of assumed political obligations. Mr. Wm. B. Archer, who initiated the movement, writing Lincoln, complains: "Ohio and Iowa treated me badly and I'll see them paid off." His letter recently published, however, exonerates the Iowans from recreancy. It shows clearly that he and Lincoln's friends did not make a move until McLean's nomination for the first place was found to be impracticable, namely midnight before Fremont's nomination was made; and then the Iowans had personally committed themselves to Dayton and would not consent to switch their vote.<sup>1</sup>

Whether the delegates from Iowa to the Philadelphia convention were, or were not, indifferent or recreant as regards the claims of Mr. Lincoln to their support they had hardly returned to their homes before their keen-eyed and resourceful leader, Governor Grimes, addressed Mr. Lincoln, inviting him to come over the river and give his aid and influence to the Republicans to increase their chances of carrying Iowa for Fremont and Dayton. Mr. Lincoln felt constrained to decline but with a suggestion that events might induce him to accede to the Governor's wishes. His letter is interesting:

Yours of the 29th of June was duly received. I did not answer it because it plagued me. This morning I received another from Judd and Peck, written by consultation with you. Now let me tell you why I am plagued:

---

<sup>1</sup>*Century*, Vol. LXXVI, p. 189—Jesse W. Weik, "*Lincoln's Vote for Vice President*," etc.



1. I can hardly spare the time.

2. I am superstitious. I have scarcely known a party preceding an election to call in help from the neighboring States, but they lost the State. Last fall, our friends had Wade, of Ohio, and others, in Maine, and they lost the State. Last Spring our adversaries had New Hampshire full of South Carolinians, and they lost the State. And so generally, it seems to stir up more enemies than friends.

Have the enemy called in any foreign help? If they have a foreign champion there, I should have no objection to drive a nail in his track. I shall reach Chicago on the night of the 15th, to attend to a little business in court. Consider the things I have suggested, and write me at Chicago. Especially write me whether Browning consents to visit you. Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.

Mr. Lincoln's "superstition" is not uncommon among experienced politicians; but it was not unconquerable; as in 1860 following his Cooper Institute speech he "invaded" Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire in his celebrated New England tour. The letter indicates the considerations that controlled much, if not most, of Mr. Lincoln's tactics in his political activity between 1854 and 1860, namely—if any distinguished champion of the Democratic party entered the lists within his own circuit or within the range of his influence Mr. Lincoln would consent to follow and drive nails in his track. Thus he systematically pursued Stephen A. Douglas in Illinois; thus he pursued him over into Iowa in 1858; and thus he followed close upon his great rival into Ohio in 1859.<sup>1</sup>

The communications between the republican leaders of Iowa and Illinois in 1856 indicate very clearly not only popular interest in Iowa in the rising statesman of Illinois and recognition of his increasing influence but unmistakable signs of practical political co-operation between the party leaders of the two states—a fact that perhaps constituted the ground of Mr. Archer's resentment of the conduct of the Iowans at Philadelphia. The Mr. Judd referred to in the correspondence was doubtless Mr. Norman B. Judd who later played a conspicuous part in the promotion of the candidacy of Mr. Lincoln at Chicago. Mr. Judd was then or shortly thereafter one of the

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<sup>1</sup>The above letter was dated "Springfield, Illinois, July 12, 1856." It is taken from Dr. Salter's *Grimes*, pp. 83-84.

directors of the Chicago and Rock Island railroad company and of the Mississippi and Missouri railroad then projected into Iowa and was thus in the nature of the case personally much interested in the developments in Iowa.<sup>1</sup>

Some two or three months later the Republicans of Muscatine arranged for a general rally of their cohorts and leaders to be held in that city September 23. Mr. Henry O'Conner, one the Republican Presidential Electors at Large, casting about for notabilities to grace the occasion and attract the multitude addressed a letter to Mr. Lincoln inviting him to be present. In his reply he said that he should be glad to attend but Iowa was "out of all danger" and his duty was in "Illinois where much hard work" had to be done.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. *First Expressions—1856-1857.*

Forecasting the Presidential fates is an inveterate habit of Americans, particularly of editors and politicians. The quadrennial election is no sooner over than some venture upon predictions or suggestions as to candidates for the ensuing Presidential contest. The practice was vigorous in the fifties. The returns showing Buchanan's triumph in 1856 had hardly been certified before the *N. Y. Herald* ran up Fremont's name as the best candidate for the Republicans in 1860. It asserted that the opponents of the Slavocrats could "only hope" for

<sup>1</sup>Hon. Peter A. Dey to the writer Aug. 1, 1908. At the stockholders' meeting in Davenport in the forepart of 1859 the following were among those elected to the Board of Directors of the M. & M. R. R.: Gen. John A. Dix, N. B. Judd, Hiram Price and J. Scott Richmond. See *Montezuma Weekly Republican*, June 16, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Lincoln's Works* (Miller ed.), Vol. IX, p. 19.

Since the above was written the writer has obtained another bit of interesting evidence of Lincoln's interstate reputation, twelve years before the letters cited above. In the campaign of 1844 the Whigs of Burlington arranged for a Mass meeting in that city on July 13th. They issued a printed circular under date of July 1st, inviting "the attendance of the Whigs of the Territory generally." Among the active promoters of the meeting was James W. Grimes. He sent one of the circulars to Mr. David E. Blair of Yellow Springs in Des Moines County and on an inner page wrote urgently asking him to arouse and bring the voters of his "whole township" to the meeting. The note closes with the statement, added evidently as a conclusive inducement warranting his attendance, namely—"Baker and Lincoln of Ill. & some Mo. men—besides Lowe, Woodward, Reid & are expected." The Baker referred to was Edward D. Baker, that year a candidate for Congress, having defeated Lincoln for the nomination; later Senator from Oregon; killed at Ball's Bluff in 1861. The original circular with Grimes' letter therein was sent the writer by a son of the original recipient, M. W. Blair of Mediapolis, Iowa.

success "under the name of Fremont;"<sup>1</sup> that his nomination would signify the popular overthrow of the oligarchical rule of politicians "who care for no earthly thing but the spoils;"<sup>2</sup> and after pointing out that he had excelled Jackson and Harrison in popularity it declared that "in every direction the Fremont papers are running up his name for 1860."<sup>3</sup>

After quoting his eastern contemporary Mr. J. B. Howell, Editor of *The Gate City* of Keokuk closed an editorial (November 11) with the prediction that the next president "will be John Charles Fremont! Look over the field calmly and considerately, and answer, Why not?" On the same date Mr. John Mahin said in the *Muscatine Daily Journal*: "We would rather run his name to our mast head today for the conflict in 1860 than that of any other man in America. Such we believe the sentiment of the Republican party everywhere." Just a week later Mr. C. C. Flint urged caution in the *Dubuque Daily Republican* under the suggestive caption "Let us Go to Work:"—"It is not wise to keep up the names of Presidential candidates for the next four years, with all the drill of a Presidential campaign. We say this without abating in the least the love and honor which we shall always bear to Colonel Fremont, and with the firm determination of supporting him for the Presidency in 1860. He is our man for that office and we know that we shall elect him then if he lives. But men die; times change; principles—the principles of Truth and Justice embodied in the Republican platform—they alone are permanent. What then, shall we do! Let us keep up our local organization." The writer was not certain whether he should let prudence or sentiment prevail. It was not strange perhaps for we are told that the Fremonters of St. Charles (now Charles City) felt their defeat so intensely that on November 27th they not only had their party pennants still flying but had the national ensign "dressed" in mourning and displayed at half-mast, and though defeated

<sup>1</sup>*New York Herald*, Nov. 8, 1856. <sup>2</sup>*Ib.*, Nov. 9th.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.*, Nov. 12th. Before 1860 the management of *The Herald* suffered a radical change, the Rochester speech of Seward and the raid of John Brown on Harpers Ferry causing it to become a violent opponent of the Republican party.

"seem to have lost none of their energy, none of their enthusiasm for their youthful leader."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mahin, on the same day urged Republicans to direct their attention to the "organization;" "Such is the watchword everywhere." He then gives some sound advice that their recent defeat made very pertinent, namely, to conciliate the Fillmore vote by "as liberal policy towards the American party as fidelity to the fundamental principles of our creed will permit."

Specific discussion of candidates and issues for 1860 suffered a lull for several months. Discussion was stirred in the east when in June 1857 the Republicans of New Hampshire at their State Convention by resolution commended Fremont to the country for the Presidency in 1860. There were but few echoes in Iowa. Mr. Howell briefly noted the fact with the cautious observation: "It is too early yet to commit ourselves very decidedly. But if, when the proper time comes, the name of Fremont should prove more acceptable to the Republican masses, we shall do battle for him with a right good will."<sup>2</sup> The State campaign that year, however, elicited a noteworthy expression from Mr. A. W. Hackley, editor of the *Dubuque Daily Tribune* (September 11, 1857): the immediate considerations in the local canvass provoked it but he clearly had ultimate developments in mind. Discussing "The Real Issue" his initial sentences were:

"The real issue now before the people is Slavery, and this will continue to be the all controlling issue until either Freedom or Slavery triumph. Two such antagonistic principles cannot long exist and both be struggling for mastery; one or the other must yield."

Mr. Hackley here stated forcefully the same thought that Abraham Lincoln ten months later put into more luminous phrase in his speech at Springfield (June 16) when he was chosen to contest the Senatorship with Stephen A. Douglas; and that Wm. H. Seward later expressed in his celebrated speech at Rochester (October 25) which Von Holst tells us had the effect of a "mighty clap of thunder."<sup>3</sup> Complete original-

<sup>1</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, Nov. 27, 1856.

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, July 20, 1857.

<sup>3</sup>*History*, Vol. VI, p. 265.

ity cannot be claimed for Mr. Hackley as the Richmond (Va.) *Enquirer* had in 1856 (May 6) clearly pointed out the inherent antagonism between Free Labor and Slavery.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>The chain of title to the thought and phraseology of Lincoln's declaration—"A house divided against itself cannot stand," I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free"—is slightly obscured.

In his speech at Columbus (O.) Lincoln said (Sept. 16, 1859): "It is true that exactly fifteen months ago this day, I believe, I for the first time expressed a sentiment upon this subject" (*Works*, Vol. IV, p. 209). The next day at Cincinnati he said: "But neither I nor Seward, nor Hickman is entitled to enviable or unenviable distinction of having first expressed that idea. The same idea was expressed by the Richmond *Enquirer* in Virginia in 1856 quite two years before it was expressed by the first of us" (*Works*, *ib.*, p. 260).

Lincoln's statements are to be taken strictly, viz., as applicable only to the first public expressions of the idea for the thought and the same form of expression was uttered by him three if not four years before. Miss Tarbell cites Judge T. Lyle Dickey who asserted that when the Kansas-Nebraska storm broke Lincoln said to him "I tell you that this nation can not exist half slave and half free" (*Life*, I-288). In what Von Holst calls "the remarkable letter of August 15, 1855" to George Robinson of Lexington, Kentucky, the last paragraph contains the same thought—"Our political problem now is 'Can we as a nation continue together permanently—forever—half slave and half free?'" (*Works*, VIII-57.) These were private expressions of the thought that was gathering strength as he studied the developments of the problem but he was not prepared to risk his political fortunes or to put in jeopardy those of his party on the throw of a public pronouncement for Mr. Rhodes tells us that he incorporated the idea in the draft of a speech in 1856 but on advice struck it out (*History*, II-315).

A few days after the passage of the Nebraska act in 1854 the same sentiment, worded somewhat differently, was expressed in the N. Y. *Tribune*:

"... The permanence of the Union is predicable only upon one of two conditions, either the South must put an end to slavery, or the North must adopt it."

General James Grant Wilson in his *Life of Chas. A. Dana* accredits the editorial to Horace Greeley. (pp. 129-130.)

To what extent the expression of the Richmond *Enquirer* was current in the West in 1856 I can not say. Lincoln evidently kept his weather eye upon its columns as his speech in Chicago on Dec. 10th of that year indicates. The furious attacks upon the Republicans for their announcement and reiteration that the conflict of slavery and freedom was irrepressible drew the following rejoinder from *The Gate City* of Keokuk, Nov. 23, 1859:

"[the] announcement in lucid terms of Lincoln and Seward, and the making it a basis of argument, has, in point of fact, been announced most frequently, clearly and pointedly by the ultra part of the slaveholders. . . . It was the sagacious apprehension of this fact that caused Calhoun and his followers to decide upon an aggressive policy. . . .

"We have been led to these reflections by the remembrance of an article from the Richmond *Enquirer* which we long ago published, and in which occurs this plain and striking statement of the fact:

"Two opposite and conflicting forms of society cannot among civilized men coexist and endure. The one must give way and cease to exist—the other becomes universal.

"If free society be unnatural, immoral and unchristian, it must fall and give way to slave society—a social system old as the world—as universal as man."

"Did ever Seward or Lincoln or Thomas Jefferson state the case more definitely, or imperatively than that?"

The date of the first publication of *The Enquirer's* statement by *The Gate City* I have not discovered.

The phrase "a house divided against itself, etc.," had long been a favorite one with Lincoln. He used it effectively, as Chairman of a Committee, in an Address to the Whigs of his Congressional District in 1843, urging "harmony" and active, concerted effort on the part of the opponents of the Democratic party. See Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, etc.*, Vol. 1-219.



Again we may note a continuing public interest in Abraham Lincoln in Iowa three years before his nomination. The Republicans of Iowa had good reason to regard their prospects in the Fall elections of 1857 with anxiety and their leaders looked here and there for assistance. Some time in July or August Governor Grimes wrote Mr. Lincoln and tried to secure his promise to come over and speak one or more times during the campaign for the adoption of the new constitution. Mr. Lincoln was not unwilling to come but his court engagements, the Rock Island Bridge case in particular, prevented his giving more than a conditional promise. He agreed to speak at Davenport in case the court should require a personal examination of the physical conditions of the bridge at Rock Island, and he asked Governor Grimes for data relative to the points in issue affecting the old and new constitutions. He was unable to fulfill his promise, but the fact that Governor Grimes, one of the coolest, keenest judges of political ability and popular speakers, should again seek to secure the assistance of Lincoln in such a campaign indicates very clearly that the Illinois lawyer was then a man with a decided interstate reputation.<sup>1</sup>

In commenting upon an address of N. P. Banks before the American Institute in New York, Mr. A. B. F. Hildreth in an eulogistic editorial comes very near putting him forward as a candidate but he merely recognizes his strong qualities and suggests that his remarkable achievements theretofore would not make his achievement of Presidential honors at all surprising.<sup>2</sup>

So far as I can discover the first clear cut expression of specific preference and advocacy of a candidate was made in northern central Iowa. In the issue of *The Hamilton Freeman* of December 10, Mr. Charles Aldrich placed at the head of his editorial column:—"For President, 1860—JOHN C. FREMONT," and immediately below "For United States Senator—JAMES W. GRIMES." The names appeared with little comment and no exhortation. In an editorial note of a

<sup>1</sup>Salter's *Grimes*, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup>*The St. Charles Intelligencer*, Nov. 5, 1857.

few lines he says simply:—They are “two statesmen whom we ardently desire to see chosen. . . . They are so thoroughly known and appreciated by the people of northwestern Iowa, that we shall not today enter into any exposition of their merits—Believing them to be the men of all others whose eminent services are demanded by the exigencies of the times, we shall contribute our humble efforts to swell the tide of their success.”

The conjunction of the two names was probably not without significance. Governor Grimes was then a national figure. As early as 1855 a Cleveland (O.) paper had suggested his nomination for Vice-President as a running mate for Salmon P. Chase.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the hue and cry of northern Iowa for the selection of a Senator from the north half of the state, Mr. Aldrich urged Governor Grimes as one most fit to complete the party triumph begun in 1854. The announcement, however, has a more decided significance. Mr. Aldrich had but recently come from central western New York where he had been an influential factor in local and state politics as editor of *The Olean Journal*. He was there in the thick of the party contentions when Know-Nothingism and Temperance agitation were rampant, working the temporary defeat of his personal friend, Congressman, later Governor and Senator, Reuben E. Fenton. Being a New Yorker we should naturally anticipate that Mr. Aldrich would have been an enthusiastic advocate of his State's distinguished Senator for the Republican nomination for the Presidency. On the contrary we find neither advocacy of nor so much as favorable reference to Mr. Seward. His reticence respecting the statesman of Auburn continued from 1857 up to the assembling of the convention in Chicago in 1860.

Following Mr. Aldrich a few days later Mr. Hackley at Dubuque noting the increased speculation of “politicians and wireworkers” and the action of the Republicans of New Hampshire respecting Fremont says that Fremont's name “is at the head of a number of country journals”; but he does not indicate whether in Iowa or not. Of possible candidates

<sup>1</sup>Salter's *Grimes*, p. 79.

he says that N. P. Banks is "not unlikely to become one of the most prominent"; but "Wm. H. Seward is at the present time probably the strongest man in the party."<sup>1</sup>

#### *4. Coalition among the Opposition Discouraged.*

During 1858 the discussion of the Presidential succession almost ceased. When the excitement over the Leecompton constitution was at its height in Washington Charles Sumner wrote Theodore Parker: "What is doing in Massachusetts? Is everybody asleep?" As one reads the newspapers of Iowa for 1858 the same query suggests itself—the absence of definite, vigorous interest, the lack of views and suggestions are noteworthy. Everybody seemed to be awaiting developments. Editors occasionally reprinted extracts of articles in eastern papers that made favorable mention of a possible candidate or referred in favorable terms to some of their public utterances. Thus Mr. Mahin made note of the "powerful" letter of Edward Bates against Buchanan's administration;<sup>2</sup> and Mr. John Teesdale notwithstanding the criticism of Hale and others lauded Seward as a Hampden and a Burke for his speech of March 5 that "poured such an avalanche of burning truth" upon the administration.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Mahin pronounced "sensible" the suggestion of the *Richmond Whig* that the Southerners would do well to "fraternize with and support Seward for the Presidency" rather than Douglas whom they denounced as "worse than Seward."<sup>4</sup> The *Crescent* of New Orleans in June declared that "Wm. H. Seward will be the next President if he lives and the Union lasts" and forthwith urged disruption as preferable. Mr. Howell reprints, but indicates no preference; he simply expresses defiance, observing—"if he is elected, or any other of the great republican leaders, all such fanatics as the *Crescent* . . . will be driven like dogs to their kennels or hung by the wayside as a warning to traitors."<sup>5</sup> Mr. Aldrich kept Fremont's

<sup>1</sup>*Dubuque Daily Tribune*, Dec. 18, 1857.

<sup>2</sup>*Muscatine Daily Journal*, March 17, 1858.

<sup>3</sup>*Tri-Weekly Citizen*, March 16, 1858.

<sup>4</sup>*The Muscatine Journal*, June 29, 1858.

<sup>5</sup>*The Gate City*, June 30, 1858.

name at the head of his editorial page continuously until Nov. 5, 1858. He did not urge the consideration of Fremont editorially. He referred to him once. So far as I can learn he elicited no favorable echo from the party press of the State. He removed the name without comment and did not refer again to Fremont in his discussion of Presidential candidates. His purpose may have been, and probably was, purely strategical, namely, to develop public sentiment *pro* or *con*. If such was his purpose he certainly discovered that the sentiment was not *pro*.

One matter only seems to have educed any strong expressions during 1858. The violent break of Douglas with Buchanan and the southern leaders and his stout fight against the Lecompton constitution made a number of the Republican leaders in the east urge an alliance with him and the promotion of his leadership. Many expected and not a few advocated a new party organization that might comprehend all varieties of the opposition to the Administration especially the large body of Americans that had supported Fillmore. With Greeley of *The Tribune* favoring the former and Raymond of *The Times* suggesting the probability of if not promoting the latter a new order of things seemed immanent. The response in Iowa from the Republicans was not favorable.

Mr. Mahin while admiring Douglas' heroic opposition to the Administration and inclining to credit his course to sincere and patriotic motives nevertheless closed a judicial editorial with the following unequivocal language: "In whatever light we may regard him, we must still be forced to the conviction that he is unworthy of the confidence of the North until he arrays himself in sackcloth and ashes for his past political sins and by protracted service in the cause of freedom proves his faith by his works."<sup>1</sup> The proposal that a new political party be organized he gave short shrift: "It is idle to talk of any other party than the Republican to oppose the Administration. . . . The issue before the country is slavery or freedom . . . As Republicans we are not in favor of compromising . . . Our platform is broad enough for all the

<sup>1</sup> *The Muscatine Journal*, Dec. 29, 1857.

brave hearted freemen of the country to stand on. It needs no enlargement nor any additional planks."<sup>1</sup>

The scheme and schemers for the reconstruction or coalition of the opposition parties met with a scornful reception from *The Hamilton Freeman* (June 24). Mr. Aldrich's editorial on "The Reconstruction of Parties" presents the case with such vigor and gives so many points of the hostility to the plan that it is given at length. There is much in the phraseology and in the attitude of the writer towards compromise that we find later in the racy letters of Fitz Henry Warren to J. S. Pike and to Samuel Bowles of *The Springfield (Mass.) Republican* in the forepart of 1860 when a movement somewhat similar was vigorously promoted.

There seems to be a general movement, says Mr. Aldrich, on the part of the Fillmore wing of the American Party, aided and abetted by some of the more eccentric of the Republican press to reconstruct parties, meaning by this, a union of that faction with the Republican party upon the basis of a new organization, a new party with a new name, with a platform that shall discard the doctrines of the Republicans—that "Freedom is National and Slavery Sectional," and that shall also be silent in regard to the extension of slavery into the Territories—in short, a party bound together and cemented by the sole object of opposition to the present administration and a *division of the spoils*.

The game of Americanism has been played out, and these old fossils have been left "sticking out,"—they now desire part and parcel with the victorious republicans, but true to their instincts and antecedents they must bring the great triumphant and rapidly increasing Republican party down to their own level. They have the unblushing impudence and effrontery to ask us to give up the republican organization—to strike from our Platform ALL for which we have been contending—ALL that gives life or vitality to the party—ALL that makes us any more elevated than the Democratic party—to stultify ourselves—renounce our principles—give up our name and all for what? Why simply, to allow this miserable, lying, petrified squad of unadulterated old fogies, who traduced John C. Fremont in 1856—and elected Buchanan President—to come in and share in the spoils of victory that the Republicans are sure to win *without them*—and (can impudence go farther?) upon terms dictated by themselves and disgraceful to us!

If we are wrong in our conclusions—if the Fillmore men do not desire this surrender on the part of the Republicans—but are willing

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.*, May 29, 1858.



to adopt our principles—and are from principle anxious to aid in the overthrow of the present party in power why do they demand any surrender of names or principles on our part? We have as a party conscientiously opposed, James Buchanan, from the day he was nominated—and all measures of his administration. If the Fillmore men had done the same—if they had cast their votes for the only man who stood the least chance of defeating Mr. Buchanan—instead of throwing them away upon Mr. Fillmore—a good, reliable, competent republican would have stood at the head of the government at this moment—safely guiding the ship of state over the shoals and rocks on which Mr. Buchanan has well nigh foundered it.

The Republican Party to-day are in the majority in every free State in the Union with the exception, perhaps, of California; and yet this little squad of antiquated politicians, who are unable to control half a dozen school districts in the United States, gravely ask the Republican[s] to reorganize their party on such a basis, as will admit them to share the spoils, without any surrender on their part. Our preference stands at the head of our columns, [viz. Fremont.]

Mr. Hildreth while not advocating a coalition recognized that the concurrent and conciliatory actions of various factional leaders of the Opposition in Congress in resisting the Lecompton frauds would doubtless lead to new party alignments favorable to Freedom and the Republican program. Noting the gathering interest in Presidential candidates and coalitions he said in the forepart of October: "The Presidential future begins to be discussed. The elements are various and curious. . . . As to the Republican party it is impossible to predict anything" He believed that the recent "patriotic votes" of the Republicans on the Crittenden-Montgomery bill in Congress, Corwin's national canvass in Ohio, Greeley's concessions to Popular sovereignty and the indisposition of the Republicans to insist on "no more slave states" would bring about a new alignment of national parties and hence the futility of predictions or the aggressive promotion of particular candidates.<sup>1</sup>

##### 5. *The Lincoln—Douglas Debates.*

Biographers, historians and literateurs have exalted beyond all peradventure the Debates between Abraham Lincoln and

<sup>1</sup> *The St. Charles Intelligencer*, Oct. 7, 1858.

Stephen A. Douglas in 1858 as the *causa causans* of Lincoln's later exaltation and the major fact that brought the people of the nation to their senses respecting the great issue in the quadrennium preceding the political revolution in 1860. More than this not a few would have us believe that the people were tremendously aroused and universally alert in their appreciation of the crucial character of the encounter. Thus one learned historian tells us that the debate "was followed by the whole people with strained attention."<sup>1</sup> This may have been so; but if so the people of Iowa were for the most part in the state of mind described by Sir Walter Scott's little friend—"more than usual calm."

An examination of twenty different papers published in sixteen different communities demonstrates that the public interest in the debates on this side of the Mississippi was very various and curious withal. One or two editors only seem to have had a lively sense of the strategic importance of the contest but none apparently at the time perceived that anything besides Douglas' senatorial and perhaps his presidential chances hung in the balances. Most of those who manifest any interest at all exhibit but little beyond the common concern that is aroused by an interesting spectacle. Several of the influential papers, both Democratic and Republican, show practically no interest, scarcely noticing it either in editorial or in news column. As Douglas spoke at Galena and Rock Island, and Lincoln at Augusta and Carthage, and both met at Quincy all within hail and each separately crossed the river, visited and spoke at Burlington during the canvass the amount of attention to the progress of the debates was somewhat more in the eastern cities of Iowa than in the inland towns. A brief summary of the notes and comments is not inappropriate nor without value.

The columns of *The Gate City* contain nothing especially noteworthy. Lincoln's challenge and the virulent opposition of the Administration to Douglas are noted. Douglas' gross misrepresentation of Lincoln's connection with the "Abolition" conspiracy and platform in 1854 in the initial debate at

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<sup>1</sup>Von Holst, *History*, Vol. VI, p. 287.

Ottawa is branded by Mr. Howell as a "forgery." (Aug. 31.) The fatal answer of Douglas to the second Freeport question is noted (Sept. 17); an extract from Lincoln's Charleston speech relative to negro quality is given (Oct. 1). An excursion to Quincy (\$1.50 round trip) is advertised and "several hundred" went down. The debate at that place is concisely related and the jubilation of the Republicans and the depression of the Democrats at the outcome are asserted (Oct. 15). When Lincoln was advertised to speak at Carthage all who desired "to hear one of the most celebrated" orators were advised to go (Oct. 20). But there is nothing whatever that signifies public interest that is abnormal; at most there is nothing more intense than is frequently witnessed in national and state campaigns.

In the latter weeks of the contest between the meetings at Galesburg and Quincy the people of Burlington were permitted to hear Abraham Lincoln speak on the great questions in issue. Douglas had spoken in the city a short time before. The chairman of the Republican county committee, Mr. Charles Ben Darwin, one of the best lawyers of Burlington, knowing Lincoln's tactics of following close on Douglas' trail, invited him to favor the city with an address. As he was listed to speak in the afternoon of Oct. 9 at Oquawka he consented to stop over and speak in Burlington in the evening, in the open air if the weather would permit. The arrangement apparently was not announced before the morning of the 8th. A brief but effective notice of the speech and the speaker was published in *The Hawk-eye*. Referring to the debate at Galesburg, Editor Clark Dunham states: "Those we conversed with think Mr. Lincoln the ablest and most popular speaker they ever heard and say he had altogether the advantage of Douglas in the argument, even Douglas' friends acknowledging it." The notice closes with "Huzza for Lincoln." In the next morning's issue three separate notices are inserted, one, two and three line notices—one of which reads: "There will be a Grand Concert at the People's Garden this evening immediately after Mr. Lincoln's speech." Concerning "Abe Lincoln's Speech at Grimes Hall," Mr. Dunham remarks on Monday:

Grimes' Hall was filled to its full capacity . . . So great is the sympathy felt here in the spirited canvass in Illinois, and so high is the opinion entertained of the ability of Mr. Lincoln as a speaker that a very short notice brought together from twelve to fifteen hundred ladies and gentlemen.

High, however, as was the public expectation, and much as was anticipated, he, in his address of two hours, fully came up to the standard that had been erected. It was a logical discourse, replete with sound argument, clear, concise and vigorous, earnest, impassioned and eloquent. Those who heard recognized in him a man fully able to cope with the little giant anywhere, and altogether worthy to succeed him.

We regret exceedingly that it is not in our power to report his speech in full this morning. We know that we could have rendered no more acceptable service to our readers. But it is not in our power.

Mr. Lincoln appeared Saturday evening fresh and vigorous, there was nothing in his voice, manner or appearance to show the arduous labors of the last two months—nothing to show that immense labors of the canvass had worn upon him in the least. In this respect he has altogether the advantage of Douglas, whose voice is cracked and husky, temper soured and general appearance denoting exhaustion.<sup>1</sup>

Several queries suggest themselves that are pertinent in determining the degree of public interest in Burlington regarding Lincoln at that time. Was the Grand Concert referred to one of the inducements to lure a crowd to hear him? If so much was expected of the speaker why, with two or three days' notice, was not *The Hawk-eye* prepared to give its readers a verbatim report of the speech? If the speech so greatly exceeded anticipation why was not the public not present given a detailed summary of the main points made by the noted speaker, so that the cause which Mr. Dunham favored no less could be promoted far beyond the circuit of that particular audience? The three hundred words or so devoted to the occasion and the man, while highly laudatory, do not demonstrate an abnormal or extremely acute public interest. I have found no reference in the contemporary press of the State to the fact that Burlington was favored with the presence of the two noted political gladiators during the progress of their celebrated canvass in 1858 and no one now-a-days,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Hawk-eye*, Oct. 11, 1858.



aside from old residents of Burlington is aware of the fact.<sup>1</sup>

So far as his pages indicate the editor of *The Journal* at Muscatine felt but little more than a languid interest in the forensic contest on the other side of the river. A short dispatch or extract from some account by another appears relative to most of the debates but there is no especial editorial mention. The space given seldom exceeds a "stickful." Mr. Mahin evidently went up to Rock Island where he heard Douglas; and he closes his summary of the speech with the interesting observation: "We venture to say that the majority of his audience went away with the conviction that Mr. Douglas was on the wrong side and knew it himself but feeling more sorrow than anger in the conviction." (Oct. 30.) The organ of the Democrats in that city although it devotes some space to Douglas' speeches in July gives the debates no consideration. It expresses great satisfaction when the returns gave Douglas the senatorship,<sup>2</sup> but there is no sign of recognition of the political revolution that was so greatly hurried forward by that now celebrated tournament.

A decided and lively interest in the Illinois contest is manifested in the *Davenport Daily Gazette*. Its editor, Mr. Add H. Sanders, realizes the national importance of the campaign. "Our sister state is in a gloriously excited condition . . . . Indeed with the elections approaching in many other states, the eyes of politicians everywhere appear to be turned most anxiously toward the election in Illinois. The reason is the coming election fixes the political destiny of Stephen A. Douglas, so far as any single event can accomplish that object. If

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<sup>1</sup>The writer is indebted to Dr. William Salter, Iowa's venerable historian, to Mr. W. W. Baldwin, Tax Commissioner of the C., B. & Q. Ry., and to Miss Daisy N. Sabin, Librarian of the Free Public Library—all of Burlington for the data in the paragraphs above relative to Douglas and Lincoln's appearances in Burlington. Mr. Baldwin's letter of June 10, 1907, relates the following incident that strikingly illustrates the simplicity of manner and method of Judge Douglas' opponent, an eye-witness telling him the story.

When Mr. Lincoln arrived at the old Barrett House where he stopped while in Burlington he had in his hand a small package, wrapped in a newspaper. Handing it to the clerk at the desk he asked him to "Please take good care of that. It is my boiled shirt. I will need it this afternoon." It was his only "baggage".

As Mr. Baldwin remarks in a later letter the incident is interesting for the contrast it affords with the methods of far less important people, who can not go about without a valet or a retinue of servants.

<sup>2</sup>*The Iowa Democratic Enquirer* (wk.), Nov. 11, 1858.

defeated he will be politically dead. If successful it will give him higher hopes of attaining the great goal of his ambition, than he could have reasonably indulged during the last four years." (Sept. 3.) There is considerable space given to accounts of Douglas' triumphal journeys, to extracts from Lincoln's speeches, to comments upon the course of the discussion and to fraternal commiseration of the dire fratricidal dissension among the Douglas and Administration Democrats in Iowa.<sup>1</sup> At Dubuque, *The Express and Herald*, a Douglas organ, paid more or less attention to Douglas' campaign but seldom mentioned Lincoln and then only with contempt. It printed (Aug. 4) a Chicago dispatch that designates Lincoln as a cringing, fawning "Uriah Heap," when referring to his presence at the Douglas meeting in Chicago, July 9; and sneers at "That rank Abolitionist Lincoln" who dares to presume to seek the place of the "Little Giant," who it declares, is "the greatest man in the American Senate." Aug. 25.) At the Galena meeting Mayor Hetherington of Dubuque was one of the notables who escorted Douglas to the platform. (Aug. 26.)

Going inland we find much less interest in the debates so far as the pages of newspapers afford evidence thereof, although there were at least two instances of marked appreciation of their importance. The *Ottumwa Courier* reprints Lincoln's entire speech at Chicago, July 10th—seven solid columns—and Mr. J. W. Norris observed editorially (Aug. 12): "The indications are that it will be the most exciting canvass that we have ever had in this country." Mr. Norris immediately thereafter went east and nothing further is found in his columns about the contest in Illinois. Mr. A. J. Dowling, editor of the *Montezuma Weekly Republican*, has frequent notes and comments upon the debate but none that indicate extraordinary interest.

At Vinton, the editor of *The Eagle*, Mr. Thomas Drummond, indicates a keen appreciation of the contest in Illinois. Lincoln's great Springfield speech he reprinted almost entire

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<sup>1</sup>The writer is under obligations to Mr. Otha Thomas of Valley Junction and to Mr. Harry E. Downer of Davenport for the above citations from the *Davenport Daily Gazette*.



(Aug. 21). He makes the following observations upon the character and significance of the senatorial contest (Oct. 23):

The political contest now waging in Illinois in the earnestness, zeal, and even bitterness with which it is conducted by all parties exceeds anything of the kind ever before known in that state or perhaps in the Union. Even the memorable campaign of '40 sinks below it for intensity and enthusiasm. Men now think of nothing else—the struggle is for life or death. Upon the result in Illinois this year depends the Presidency in 1860. If Douglas is beaten now for the Senate he is beaten forever and consigned to political oblivion. If he is successful he will be the acknowledged chief of the whole Democratic Party, hold Buchanan at his mercy and without doubt receive the nomination of the Charleston convention.

Mr. Drummond thought that Lincoln would triumph over Douglas, although he perceived that an unjust apportionment might give the legislative majority to the latter. In his comments upon the victory of Douglas Mr. Drummond says that Lincoln's defeat was due to two causes; first, the adverse apportionment and, second, the attitude of the eastern press, saying scarcely a word in condemnation of Douglas and dubiously commending the Republicans of Illinois who had to bear the brunt of the bitter fight. Mr. Drummond, while he watched the debates with keen zest, says nothing about Lincoln that indicates that he perceived his remarkable ability and achievements and he makes no mention of the Freeport questions.<sup>1</sup>

At Indianola, was the *Weekly Visitor*, an "Independent" in policy, whose editor, Mr. James H. Knox, had strong anti-slavery extension views, but one can find no mention of the debates. The same is true of the two Democratic papers published at the State capital. Neither the *Iowa State Journal* nor the *Iowa Statesman* demonstrate even ordinary interest in the debates; after the decision, the latter observes (Nov. 11): "We have one gratification in the recent elections which covers up a multitude of misfortunes. DOUGLAS IS SAFE! The struggle has been a political Waterloo, with this difference—the 'man of destiny' is victorious over the allied powers." The columns of both papers are filled with

<sup>1</sup>The writer is indebted to Rev. A. B. Elliott of Vinton for the above excerpt and other data from *The Eagle*.

discussions of new railroad projects, agricultural meetings, court house controversy, Des Moines River lands, Taxes, and "Gold! Gold!" [Pike's Peak]. Such prosaic affairs chiefly engaged the interests of their readers.

One observer at the state capital, however, Mr. John Teesdale, editor of *The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, kept a keen weather eye on the encounter in Illinois—manifesting a realization of its vital significance exceeding that of any other editorial writer—at least so far as expression indicated such realization.<sup>1</sup> Noting the developments from time to time, on September 8, two weeks following the debate at Freeport he called attention to the crucial character of the struggle. After referring to the "political excitement" in "our sister state" he points out the striking contrast between the pageant of Douglas' itinerary and the modest procedure of Lincoln's progress; the dire perplexity of Douglas between the "Administration" Democrats and the Republicans who a short time previously had encouraged him in his assaults upon the Lecompton fraud, and his vicious recoil upon the Republicans when he found that the local leaders in Illinois refused to promote his candidacy; Lincoln and Trumbull's solid "shots below the water line" when they hurled the exhibits of the Congressional Record showing Douglas' course in striking from the Toombs bill the provision granting the people of Kansas the right to pass upon their constitution; Douglas' tergiversation and "artful dodging" anent popular sovereignty and the Dred Scott decision; how Lincoln's Freeport questions "threw him off his guard" and gave opportunity for a fatal thrust; how enraged the "Administration" and the Southern leaders were at his course. If Douglas should be defeated Mr. Teesdale believed he would be "entombed" beyond any hope of "political resurrection;" and if he should win he would return to Washington "to flaunt his triumph in the face of the President. . . . His vaulting ambition will lead him into deadly conflict with the President, his cabinet and supporters everywhere. It is therefore, a dubious question,

<sup>1</sup>Mr. J. M. Dixon was Associate Editor of *The Citizen* at the same time but there seems reason for believing that Mr. Teesdale penned the major editorials of the paper.

whether the Republicans have more to hope for in the defeat, than in the success of Douglas.”

Up in what was then the remote Northwest, at Sioux City, there were two live papers. Mr. F. M. Zieback, editor of *The Register*, the Democratic paper, does not so much as mention the campaign in Illinois. The editor of the Republican paper, *The Eagle*, Mr. Seth W. Swiggett, has only one editorial expression on the debate; but it shows that he perceived the momentous consequences involved in the contest. On October 23d he says: “\* \* \* American politics have never developed so close and heated a campaign as the one now in progress in Illinois. Every inch of ground presumed to be doubtful is contested with the energy of desperation. The eyes of the Union are directed on the combatants to the exclusion of all other objects of political interest for all perceive that the history of the Republic is shaping itself around the Illinois battlefield. \* \* \* whichever way the beam shall fall, (so it is held abroad) that way will the nation incline in 1860.” He does not venture to predict as to the probable outcome.<sup>1</sup>

North and east of Des Moines the indifference of the press, and of course, the people was equally noteworthy. The *Boone County News* (Oct. 1) gives a column to the debate and the week following quotes from Lincoln’s tribute to the Declaration of Independence; the *Hamilton Freeman* makes no direct reference to the contest; the *St. Charles Intelligencer* says nothing editorially but prints two letters from a correspondent in Illinois (Oct. 7, 14), who recounts some incidents of the debate. The *Quasqueton Guardian*<sup>2</sup> takes no notice of the contest. If anything more than another demonstrates that many of the preceptors of the great party of high moral ideas were “more than usual calm” anent the great debate it is the fact that the editors of the first and third papers last mentioned, Messrs. Aldrich and Rich, both fine types of the efficient Yankee character, gave their columns to recital of the details of the Morrissey-Heenan Prize Fight in Canada

<sup>1</sup>For the statements concerning the two papers of Sioux City and the extract from *The Eagle*, the writer is under obligations to Mr. F. H. Rice, and to Messrs. J. C. C. Hoskins and George Weare, who courteously permitted Mr. Rice to examine their files.

<sup>2</sup>Later *The Independence Guardian*.

while virtually ignoring the momentous encounter of principles and wits near their own doors,—a fight of the fates in very fact.<sup>1</sup>

But were the Iowans different from their compatriots in the older States to the east? Not appreciably. The *New York Herald* mentions the debate infrequently and always refers both to it and the disputants with scorn and contempt. It is a "Senatorial Prize Fight." Douglas' recreancy and disastrous course constitute the burden of its references. The seismic effect of his answer to the Freeport questions is realized; but Lincoln is ignored. The files of Greeley's *Daily Tribune* have not been available but the columns of the semi-weekly are perhaps not less instructive. The speeches of Lincoln and Douglas in June and July are reprinted, but the speeches delivered at the first debate at Ottawa are alone reproduced. Three editorials (Aug. 27, Sept. 24, Nov. 9) discussed the struggle in Illinois but Douglas is the man chiefly, almost wholly in mind; the last deals with his "signal triumph," Lincoln being ignored. There is no comment on the Freeport questions and answers. On October 22d the entire front page (six broad columns) of Mr. Greeley's great journal was given over to a minute description of the Morrissey-Heenan Prize Fight and at the bottom we read "(See Eighth Page)" As much news space, lacking two columns, was given over to the fistie bout of those two bruisers as to the now famous combat of statesmen pronounced by *The Tribune* itself to be "two eminent masters of the art of intellectual attack and defense."<sup>2</sup> The many thousand of Greeley's readers in Iowa received either the semi-weekly or the weekly issue. Wm. Lloyd Garrison's paper, *The Liberator*, does not notice the debates except to quote Douglas' reply to Lincoln respecting the Dred Scott decision.<sup>3</sup> New

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<sup>1</sup> *Hamilton Freeman*, Nov. 12 and *The Guardian*, Nov. 11, 1858. Not long before his death, in response to the writer's inquiry concerning the matter, Mr. Aldrich said, with the glint of a smile in his eyes: "Well, sir, the fact is that in some respects we editors in those days were not much better than they are now-a-days."

<sup>2</sup> *N. Y. Tribune* (S. W.), Aug. 27, 1858.

<sup>3</sup> *The Liberator*, Oct. 15, 1858.

York's "Journal of Civilization" *Harper's Weekly*, makes no mention of the debates during their occurrence but it does give us an extended account of the pugilistic bout (three columns or more), and its first and leading editorial discusses "The Great Prize Fight." Its columns on "Domestic Intelligence" during all of those months were filled with such items of news as we found in the press of Iowa, such as the doings of the Mormans, Gold discoveries, etc.<sup>1</sup>

The fact is our chroniclers and eulogists are likely to suffer from *ex post facto* obviousness in dealing with the career of Abraham Lincoln. A people, like persons, seldom realize the significance or anticipate the consequences of current events. They appreciate their sensations but not their sense and sequences. The people generally in 1858 only realized that an interesting spectacle was taking place in Illinois at the end of which one or the other contestant would be a national senator and in the case of one increased prestige would enhance his strength as a Presidential aspirant. There were but few discerning ones who saw that it would split assunder a great national party and bring about new alignments and a new national leader. These results gradually dawned upon the public consciousness.

Neither the Republicans nor the people of Iowa were oblivious of the pith and point of the discussions in Illinois. The large crowds that went from Iowa to attend the debates at Freeport, Galesburg and Quincy, to hear Douglas at Galena and Rock Island and Lincoln at Augusta and Carthage, not a few going from towns 20 and 40 miles west of the river

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<sup>1</sup> *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 30, 1858. It is but fair to state that *Harper's Weekly*, prior to the debates, did recognize the great importance of the contest in Illinois, although it signified no interest whatever in the developments and results of the debates. On July 31 in an editorial written before they were under way, entitled "The Canvass in Illinois" the writer asserts: "There can be no question but the pending canvass in Illinois is one of the most memorable contests which ever took place in the political history of the United States." After succinctly outlining the positions of the three parties in interest he closes with the words: "As such, the canvass is worthy of the closest attention."

It is a curious commentary upon the foregoing that the only signs whereby the editors manifest their interest in that memorable canvass are by two meagre items relative to Douglas, namely: one, Oct. 16, an excerpt from Douglas' account of his birth "away down in Yankee land"; and the other, Nov. 6, Vice President Breckenridge's letter favoring his re-election to the Senate. From neither, however, could one infer that an epoch-making discussion had created new political conditions in our national party strife.



as Fairfield, Mt. Pleasant and Keosauqua, indicate a keen popular interest. Some of the Republican politicians speedily discerned the practical usefulness of the points scored in Illinois and pressed them home upon their opponents in their bouts on the hustings. Thus at Vinton, Aug. 9, the editor of *The Eagle*, Mr. Thomas Drummond, harried Judge W. E. Leffingwell, the Democratic candidate for Congress, with "a series of questions which had been first propounded to Judge Douglas at Bloomington to which Mr. Drummond added several of his own."<sup>1</sup>

#### 6. *The Debates and the Presidential Succession.*

The effect of the debates upon opinion regarding the Presidential succession, while ultimately very important, was but vaguely apparent during their progress and immediately following. General Cyrus Bussey, a Marylander by stock, was then a resident of Bloomfield in Davis county. He was an admirer and staunch supporter of Stephen A. Douglas and followed the debates in Illinois with lively interest. He informs me that generally throughout southeastern Iowa the Democrats, while they scoffed at Lincoln for his temerity in venturing to break lances with the "Little Giant," and tried to make themselves believe that he was some sort of a cross between a buffoon and a monster, "half-horse-and-half-alligator" who advocated Amalgamation and "Equality with the nigger" nevertheless felt "in their bones" that the Sangamon lawyer got the better of their doughty champion. They felt, too, that notwithstanding Douglas' nominal success his opponent emerged from the contest the larger man, both intellectually and morally and they were conscious of the fact that if Douglas was of Presidential size then Lincoln must be likewise and the later suggestion of Lincoln for the Presidency did not seem illogical or strange, although as a matter of political form they "hooted" at the Rail-Splitter as a fit

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<sup>1</sup>*Dubuque Express and Herald*, Aug. 17, 1858—Editorial Correspondence from Vinton. Mr. Drummond's interrogatories are set out at length in *The Eagle*, Aug. 7, 1858.



man for the highest office in the land.<sup>1</sup>

Two of Iowa's leading lawyers heard the two champions in debate and were so much impressed by the intellectual prowess of Lincoln that they instinctively felt that he was a man of Presidential proportions and so expressed themselves at the time. Mr. Austin Adams of Dubuque, later Chief Justice of Iowa, attended the debate at Freeport and he is quoted as saying: "I have just heard the greatest man I ever listened to; he ought to be President."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Henry Strong, then one of the rising young lawyers of Keokuk,<sup>3</sup> heard the debaters in September. He wrote his college classmate, Manton Marble, then associate editor of *The Boston Journal*: "I have just heard the next President of the United States—mark my prediction, Manton." He writes me that the substance of his letter was published by his friend.<sup>4</sup>

Excepting the few comments relative to the effect of the debates upon the presidential prospects of Douglas, already noted, I have found only one direct editorial expression in the latter months of 1853, suggesting the possible political advancement of his antagonist in national affairs as a result of his achievements in that contest. It was not very explicit or emphatic, but, nevertheless, it signifies that the editor realized that Lincoln was not unlikely to become a potent national figure. In concluding an editorial upon "The Illinois Election" *The Marshall County Times* said (Nov. 24): "After all the Republicans of Illinois have done nobly; they have cause for rejoicing though but partially successfully. Let them hang out their banners on the outer walls and raise the battle cry for 1860. They may see their gallant Old Abe in the United States Senate and mayhap as its presiding officer."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interview with General Bussey, October 8, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> Gue, *History of Iowa*, Vol. IV, p. 2. Mr. Gue, or the author of the biographical sketch from which the above is taken, states that Mr. Adams heard Lincoln and Douglas at Galena; Freeport must have been intended.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Strong's law partner in those days was Mr. John W. Noble, afterward Secretary of the Interior in President Harrison's cabinet.

<sup>4</sup> Letter (MSS.) to the writer, June 4, 1907.

<sup>5</sup> The writer is indebted to Miss Nellie A. Thompson of Marshalltown for the extract from *The Times*. The authorship of the editorial cannot be stated as the paper had two editors besides a proprietor.

The discussion of Presidential possibilities came on apace in the latter months of 1858. The effect of the debates in Illinois and of the "mighty clap of thunder" resulting from Seward's speech at Rochester is manifest. As was the case two years before *The New York Herald* lead off; but a new name was on its pennant. Douglas' answers at Freeport produced an upset; on September 15 it averred that by them he had "proclaimed himself an advocate of the higher law doctrine." On the 23d it declared the nomination of Winfield Scott, "a necessity for the Opposition." A week later it appeals to the Opposition not to imitate the Democrats and "go off in petty squads under the lead of Seward, Crittenden, Banks and fifty others . . . Scott or annihilation is their only choice." Its insistence upon the hero of Lundy Lane was earnest indeed.<sup>1</sup> Seward's Rochester speech, however, produced such a violent shock to the *Herald's* sensibilities that it entirely forgot General Scott and thenceforth devoted itself to denunciation of what for nearly two years it branded as Seward's "brutal and bloody" programme.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the Republican press of Iowa was exceedingly unconcerned. I have discovered but a single reference to the *Herald's* advocacy of Scott for the Presidency. Seward's speech is "eloquent and truthful," according to Mr. Mahin;<sup>3</sup> in Mr. Aldrich's judgment "it is a great speech" and he reprints it in seven and a half columns.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Teesdale notifies his readers that he has "laid aside" the speech to reprint it entire, so important was its declarations and so desirable was it that his readers and the public should read them.<sup>5</sup> None of the Republicans regarded the sentiments of Seward with alarm. The doctrine he enunciated apparently did not seem revolutionary.

There are but few signs of direct interest in the prospective Presidential nomination. Mr. Teesdale made note of the presentation of Seward's name by the *N. Y. Courier and Enquirer* and indicated his favorable inclination by observing: "When the proper time comes there will be a great many

<sup>1</sup>*N. Y. Herald*, Oct. 11, 13, 15, 19, 1858. <sup>2</sup>*Ib.*, Oct. 30th.

<sup>3</sup>*The Muscatine Journal*, Nov. 4, 1858.

<sup>4</sup>*The Hamilton Freeman*, Nov. 12, 1858.

<sup>5</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Nov. 17, 1858.

seconds to that motion."<sup>1</sup> At Muscatine Mr. Mahin merely recorded the fact of the announcement of the proposal of the candidacy of the statesman of Auburn but made no comment whatever.<sup>2</sup>

A week later he notices the zealous contention of the *New York Herald*, that "so far as the results of the late election from having improved the chances of either Seward or Douglas for the Presidency, that the great Agitator and the 'Little Giant' have thus been farther removed from the goal of their ambition than ever they were before." The design of the editor in such notes and comments, if other than recording items of passing interest, is not manifest.

In *The Eagle* of Sioux City Mr. Swigget summed up the current "Presidential Speculations." All of them he pronounced "premature," however. "It is rashly asserted that Douglas will be the Democratic candidate. . . . By an equally hasty jumping at conclusions a great many people affirm that Seward is the inevitable candidate of the Grand Opposition. Others talk of the resurrection of Col. Fremont. "He then cites the Delphic decision of the *Louisville Journal*; namely: "The only power which can successfully cope with the United Democracy in 1860 is the United Opposition and the Opposition can be effectually united only under the leadership of a southern Whig or American. That is a fixed fact." He then refers to the *N. Y. Courier and Enquirer's* advocacy of Seward, to the *Herald's* contention for Scott, to the *Evening Post's* wish for the nomination of Chase or some other western man, to the non-committal course of *The Tribune* and to Wentworth's paper [*Chicago Democrat*] that "suggests Lincoln for President or Vice-President." The *Chicago Press* is disposed to follow the lead of the *N. Y. Tribune* and wait like Micawber for something to turn up. "Eighteen months" he concludes "is a great distance to look into futurity and there the many "surprises" to be encountered before that day comes by intelligent people generally and by wise politicians among the rest."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Nov. 17, 1858.

<sup>2</sup>*The Muscatine Journal*, Nov. 11, 1858.

<sup>3</sup>*The Eagle*, Nov. 27, 1858.

Mr. Mahin's columns contain one extended expression relative to the prospective presidential nomination that was both outright and downright, reminding us of not a little of the public discontent with party machinery manifested in recent years. The *New York Tribune*, on Nov. 19, contained a vigorous attack upon national conventions as a mode of selecting party candidates. They were, it asserted, mere caucuses of "self-elected" politicians whose deliberations and decisions were perverted because their grand objective was the acquisition and disposition of offices. The delegates in order to get the spoils *make* the nominee and thereafter control him as their representative and promoter. "Hence the frequent nomination of candidates . . . who are alike unfit and undeserving." "A convention is necessarily shy of bold, decided, positive men . . . whose opinions are a fair compromise between something and nothing." "Why not revolt against all this party machinery and smash it. What need is there for a national convention? None in the world . . ." The voters of the country in each party, in each state, are then urged to nominate—whether by caucus or convention or primary is not intimated—and to "support an Electoral Ticket pledged to vote for that candidate for President and Vice-President, respecting whom the largest number of voters for that ticket throughout the Union shall indicate as their choice." The plan is then illustrated and defended against objections. Mr. Mahin announced himself immediately (Nov. 23) as an advocate of the proposed reform and he did not mince words in declaring his advocacy of the plan. National conventions that nominated candidates and dictated platforms are "devices of the devil," made up of men "whose chief end is the glory of themselves and the bamboozlement of the people." They do not and cannot reflect public sentiment for their membership consists of "ragamuffins and bullies, political hacks and bankrupt traders." Public offices are to thence "treasure-trove which escheats by vacancy, to their especial use and profit." The suggestion of his eastern contemporary he endorses, believing it to be thoroughly practicable. The objection that factional divisions might dissipate

the party's strength and thus "elect the Charleston nominee," he derides: but "We answer, What if that follows, so be it. We would rather be defeated in voting for the man of our own free choice than be victorious in voting for the choice of such seamps as rule our national conventions. But we deny the premise." He asserts his belief that the voters of the party could and would easily unite long before the election on some one man who could poll the full strength of the party. Mr. Mahin was a fine type of the militant radical whose optimistic faith in the perfectability of mankind was not dismayed by the persistent, prosaic and perverse nature of ordinary mortals. If Mr. Mahin had been asked whether his slashing assertions applied to such men as Judge Francis Springer, Fitz Henry Warren, J. B. Howell, R. L. B. Clarke, Thomas Drummond and James Thorington, some of Iowa's Republican delegates to the first convention at Philadelphia, doubtless, like most radical reformers, he would have promptly rejoined—certainly not, such men were exceptions and merely prove the rule.<sup>1</sup>

The same theme elicited an extended expression from a Democratic partizan. Mr. Zieback, editor of *The Register* of Sioux City. He too regarded the customs and procedure in selecting the national candidate with strong disfavor, not to say disgust. Strong men and staunch leaders make too many enemies to secure the prizes of nomination. "Availability" has the right of way among and with politicians. Amiable nobodies, "obscure Generals" and "sociable pathfinders" are selected. Greeley's "patent" for curing the evils he contemplates with rather cynical feelings. Outlining the method of procedure thereunder he says: "He [Greeley] would have every state vote for its favorite candidate—Ohio for Chase, New Hampshire for Hale, Illinois for Lincoln, and so on, . . ." But he thinks that the "legerdemain" of such politicians as Weed and Greeley would defeat the popular will under such a plan. He closes with expressing the hope that Seward and Douglas be the nominees of the two parties because they best

<sup>1</sup>The six mentioned above constituted one-half of the delegation from Iowa to the convention at Philadelphia.



represent the distinctive policies of the respective parties on the slavery question.<sup>1</sup>

Both desire and opinion respecting the Presidency among the Republicans of Iowa at the close of 1858, it is clear, were incoherent, indefinite, vague. The consideration of candidates was not deemed urgent or wise because premature. The situation had become more definite, however. A figure was looming large in the political horizon. The entire country was becoming conscious of his remarkable strength and proportions and commanding influence. The political leaders for some time had had to reckon with Abraham Lincoln. The papers of the east no less than those of the west had extensively reported his speeches and quoted his pithy sayings. The votes he had received in 1856 for the nomination for the Vice-Presidency signified a much wider and more decided political acquaintance with Lincoln than most of our chroniclers have realized. Speaking at Litchfield, Maine, Mr. James G. Blaine, on June 28, 1856, referred to Lincoln's "reputation beyond the lines of his own state" gained by his acute discussions of Douglas' course in securing the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.<sup>2</sup> Before the celebrated debates were arranged for Greeley said of the Springfield speech, which he printed entire in the *Tribune* (June 24); "We need not ask attention to this concise and admirable statement. Mr. Lincoln never fails to make a good speech if he makes any and this is one of his best efforts." Such language is not used of "an unknown." In July that year the Chicago editors were surprised to find the eastern press discussing and quoting his speeches.<sup>3</sup> One finds that the editors of Iowa were likewise alive to the marked attention paid to Lincoln in the press of the eastern States. *The Gate City* (Aug. 30) cites the *Louisville Journal*, "the leading American paper of the country" which expresses admiration of Lincoln's "superior talents and noble nature" and bespeaks for him success; and also the *St. Louis Evening News*, "the leading American

<sup>1</sup>*The Register*, Dec. 2, 1858.

<sup>2</sup>Blaine, *Political Discussions*, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Nicolay & Hay—*Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. II, p. 176.



organ of Missouri'' that endorses the sentiments of the *Journal*. *The Hawk-eye* (Oct. 8) reprints a letter written from Illinois to the Rochester (N. Y.) *Democrat*, recounting the striking differences in the speeches of Lincoln and Douglas to the advantage of the former. After the result of the election in Illinois was known and it was realized that by reason of an unfair apportionment Lincoln fell short of official success but won popular success one encounters frequent laudatory references to Douglas' opponent. Thus *The Gate City* quotes (Nov. 22) the Rochester *Democrat*: "Mr. Lincoln has won a reputation as a statesman and orator which eclipses that of Douglas as the sun does the twinklers of the sky. The speeches made during the Illinois campaign have been read with great interest throughout the country . . ." Reprinting (Nov. 23) an extract from the same article, Mr. Mahin closed his quotation with the sentence: "The Republicans of the Union will rejoice to do honor to the distinguished debater of Illinois." On Nov. 30 Mr. Howell gives his readers the great Greeley's opinion of Lincoln's speeches: ". . . they were of a very high order—they were pungent without bitterness, powerful without harshness. The address at Springfield in which he opened the canvass is a model of compactness, lucidity and logic. As a condensed statement of the issues which divide the Republicans from the Democrats of our day, it has rarely, or never been exceeded." This high praise, it must be remembered, came from no willing witness—Greeley had strongly opposed the Republican opposition to Douglas.

In the south meantime expressions much more significant were being made. The southern press and leaders were outspoken in their sentiments hostile to Douglas whose position at Freeport had shown the fatal weakness of their much prized doctrine of Popular Sovereignty. The intellectual acumen of his antagonist who had so successfully forced its doughty champion to make his fatal admission was of necessity felt if not always formally recognized. Such recognition was constantly manifested by their joint condemnation, and the Iowa press was not unmindful of its significance. Thus Mr.

Howell quotes (Nov. 27) from Jefferson Davis' speech to his constituents in Mississippi, when he said that he "considered Mr. Douglas' opinions as objectionable as those of his adversary, Mr. Lincoln."<sup>1</sup> Douglas himself continued to force the public to recognize the pre-eminent abilities of his great antagonist. He started upon his southern tour which he planned with a view to placating the hostile friends of the Administration in the south. His speeches at Memphis and New Orleans were little less than earnest pleas in mitigation of the Freeport answers and Lincoln was referred to directly by him in those discourses. But a more decided, not to say dramatic, appreciation of the tremendous damage done the Democratic party and the Slavocracy by the Illinois lawyer was the summary deposition at the opening of Congress of Stephen A. Douglas from the chairmanship of the Senate committee on Territories, a position he had held for eleven years and which he had made famous or infamous in their service in connection with the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.

All these things were noted in Iowa as elsewhere and the people no less than the politicians were becoming aware that Illinois had a dominating man—dominant because he possessed not only a profound, far-seeing mind, but wonderful powers of compelling speech. As Mr. Teesdale put it in his comments upon the outcome of the debates: "Lincoln . . . has achieved a reputation second to that of few men now in public life. In all that marks a statesman, he has proven himself more than a match for Douglas; and he has linked himself to the fortunes of the Republicans by hooks of steel. The name of Lincoln will be a household word for years to come. He has a brilliant future."<sup>2</sup> King makers could ask for no more favorable conditions than those which confronted the friends and admirers of Abraham Lincoln at the close of 1858.

<sup>1</sup>See *The Gate City*, Nov. 29, 1858—Editorial on *Senator Douglas in the South*.

*The Muscatine Journal* on June 4 quoted the following from the *Montgomery* (Ala.) *Mail* of May 21 relative to the reception of Douglas in that city:

"The Squatter Giant—S. A. Douglas, the great advocate of Squatter Sovereignty, arrived here yesterday, in the eastern train, and went down in the steamer in the afternoon. A few persons hunted him up to take a look at him as they would a grizzly bear, but there was no welcome. Why should there be, of the great assassin of the South?"

<sup>2</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Nov. 17, 1858.

## II. EXPRESSIONS AND MANEUVERS IN 1859.

The mutinous disturbances in the ranks of the Democratic party incident to and following the Lincoln-Douglas debates naturally increased public interest in the presidential succession. There was exhibited in the country at large, alike in the Democratic and Republican papers, signs of a growing feeling that the dissensions within the "Administration" reflected irreconcilable differences respecting Slavery—differences so serious that they would inevitably drive either the northern or the southern wing of the Democratic party into irretrievable insurrection or opposition. Coincident with this disintegration of the party in power there were obvious drifts indicating a concentration and coalescence of the sundry groups of the Opposition. Abolitionists and Americans, German-Americans and Whigs, contradictory and divergent though their antecedents, affiliations and purposes were, saw or were beginning to feel, that the aggressions and arrogance of the Slavocrats within and without Congress made Slavery—its extension or extinction—the paramount fact in public debate. They were becoming conscious of the fact that the principles of the Republican party afforded them a fairly satisfactory common ground for concentration and concert in opposition.<sup>1</sup>

The signs in Iowa in 1859 of interest in the Presidential succession and particularly the selection of the Republican candidate while definite were not numerous. Readers of the

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<sup>1</sup>The headings of editorials in the press of Iowa and the titles of articles reprinted from eastern and southern papers during the last quarter of 1858 and the first half of 1859 afford ample and interesting evidence justifying the assertions above. The columns of *The Daily Hawk-Eye* of Burlington suffice for illustration:

The dissensions in the Democratic party are dwelt upon in an extended article reprinted Nov. 5, 1858, from the Cincinnati *Gazette*, entitled "Democracy going to Pieces—South Indignant at their Northern Allies and Repudiating their Fellowship"; Nov. 18, by two and a quarter columns devoted to a reprint of portions of a speech by Senator Hammond of South Carolina; Nov. 27, in an article—"The Northern Democracy—Where is it and What will it be?" taken from the Cincinnati *Gazette* and in a long extract from the speech of Jefferson Davis at Jackson, Mississippi; Dec. 20, in a reprint from the *Gazette* on "Senator Douglas and his Political Patchwork"; Dec. 31, in a bitter extract from *The Mississippian* of Jackson, Miss., anent Douglas' visit to the South; Jan. 10, 1859, in Correspondence, entitled "Virginia Politics and Republican Proclivities" taken from the *N. Y. Times*; Jan. 20, in a reprint of Correspondence of the *N. Y. Post*, entitled "What is Douglas going to Do?" anent the differences with his colleagues in the Senate; March 1, in a dispatch headed "New Political Division;" etc., commenting on a recent speech of Douglas at Washington; and March 2, in an editorial with the title "A House Divided Against Itself," that begins—"There is not a single question of

compact and rapid narratives of the biographers of Chase, Lincoln and Seward, and of our national historians that relate the chief developments of the pre-convention campaign among the Republicans will suffer some surprise at the dearth of expression. Editors made note of the subject infrequently. There is but little evidence of either individual or local preferences as regards candidates. Expressions relative to the principles and policies were more explicit and insistent; but there was no hue and cry. Two important facts must be appreciated in order to realize the significance of the meagre evidence of public interest in Iowa in the Republican preliminaries of 1860.

### 1. *Important Conditions Determining Expressions.*

First, newspapers were not numerous on this side of the Mississippi. Their publication was not only an expensive and laborious business, but their maintenance was dependent, in no small measure, upon the favor of the public authorities, the compensation for publishing the "Delinquent Tax List" being their major source of income. Typesetting was done by hand. Mergenthalers and linotype machines, penny dreadfuls and "Extras" daily were inconceivable. There were but four

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importance upon which the Democratic party is united—Not one. It is divided upon the tariff, the government of the territories, and at loggerheads on the nigger question generally. . . . The Democratic party is now totally 'demoralized,' to use the language of the *N. Y. Herald*. . . . The radiation from Lincoln's speech at Springfield in June is here very apparent.

The movements indicating coalescence of the opposition, the advantages thereof, and the necessity therefor are likewise noted and discoursed upon from time to time; Nov. 11, 1858, the editorials of the *N. Y. Tribune* and the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* commenting upon the "Triumph of Mr. Douglas" in Illinois were reprinted at length; Nov. 22, Greeley's plan for "uniting the opposition" by doing away with conventions is given; May 12, an editorial entitled "Union of the Opposition" cites from the *N. Y. Commercial Advertiser*; May 23, Greeley's "Appeal to Conservatives," is reprinted; and June 8, portions of Greeley's speech "On the Presidential Prospects" at Ossawatimie, Kan. (May 18), containing his advice to work for a coalition is reproduced. During the remainder of the year most of the leading editorials of *The Tribune* urging a union of the opposition are reproduced in the columns of *The Hawk-Eye*—usually, however, without comment.

The writer is under extraordinary obligations to the courtesy and consideration of Mr. W. W. Baldwin, and of Mr. J. L. Waite, editor of *The Hawk-Eye* for the foregoing and subsequent citations from the same journal.

telegraph stations in the State<sup>1</sup> and only five cities (Dubuque, Davenport, Muscatine, Burlington and Keokuk) could boast of daily papers published continuously throughout the year.<sup>2</sup> Editors, consequently, discussed men and measures under a stress of multifarious duties. They had to gather news, solicit advertisements and subscriptions, beseech and enforce collections, often do "the devil's work," while they were playing and watching the game of politics. If under such circumstances expressions of serious and well-ordered opinions by editors were infrequent, if the manifestations of interest in the issues of the approaching Presidential struggle were meagre and more or less indefinite the fact by no means signifies an absence of alert, intelligent interest among editors and their patrons.

The second basic fact to be reckoned with was the circulation of *The New York Tribune* in Iowa. That paper was by far the greatest purveyor of news in the State. No local paper possessed anything like its range and force of influence. Its power was exerted mainly perhaps outside rather than within the cities. In many, if not in most rural communities the postmasters handled more *Weekly Tribunes* than all other foreign papers combined. The homes of regular subscribers were much patronized by neighbors not subscribers. Men of means frequently made gratuitous subscriptions as gifts to nearby friends or neighbors. To the tillers of the soil its columns headed "Important to the Farmers" contained nearly all the law and the prophets. Fields were plowed; corn, wheat and trees were planted; stock housed and fed and crops garnered according to the directions of "Uncle Horace." In the animated discussions at house and barn raisings, at threshings, and husking bees, at barbecues, singing and spelling schools, at "shoots" and rallies, his columns were constantly appealed to for facts and arguments as well as for news. Pioneers, in their reminiscences of *ante bellum* days are not always quite certain whether Greeley's *Tribune* or the Bible had precedence

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<sup>1</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.) Oct. 14, 1859: A Chicago dispatch giving the returns from the recent election in Iowa and explaining the delay thereof.

<sup>2</sup>The citizens of Des Moines enjoyed a Daily during the sessions of the General Assembly, viz.: once in two years.



in the family circle.<sup>1</sup> In the forepart of 1859 the reported number of subscribers in Iowa was stated to be 7,523<sup>2</sup> and a year later the number had increased to 11,000.<sup>3</sup> Its circle of readers at the later date doubtless embraced 100,000 persons from whom its influence constantly radiated. The actual circulation of local dailies or weeklies probably in no case exceeded a third of Greeley's weekly.<sup>4</sup>

In demonstrating the development of party opinion in Iowa respecting the best selection for the Republican party's candidate for the Presidency in 1860, it is necessary to indicate the antecedent attitude of the party spokesmen towards the principles that were to make up the party platform. The drift of sentiment as to the principles of administrative policy in the nature of the case largely decides the course of party leaders in the selection of the standard bearer. The candidate is to be the executive of the principles adopted. Consequently he must be a man representative of and in sympathy with those principles. Hence, in what succeeds, considerable attention will be given to the trend of discussion of the program for the Republican party in 1860.

In tracing the growth of opinion in the party press one frequently suffers from perplexity. It is not easy always to determine the significance of news items, editorial expressions and particularly of the reprint of articles from eastern and southern contemporaries. Editors, like most mortals, labor under personal and partizan bias. Local associations and prejudices arising in business, church, politics and social connections, in the main, predispose and fix opinions and control

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<sup>1</sup>The writer's authority for the statements above consists chiefly of correspondence and interviews with pioneers—notably with Professor Jesse Macy of Iowa College at Grinnell and with the late George C. Duffield of Keosauqua.

<sup>2</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.) April 26, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*Iowa State Register* (Des Moines) April 18, 1860.

<sup>4</sup>Noting the circulation of the *N. Y. Tribune* in March, 1859, *The Hawk-Eye* observed: "There is no paper printed in the State of Iowa that has half the circulation of *The Tribune* within the State." (April 29, 1859.)

Mr. Will Porter, editor of the Democratic paper, *The Journal*, published at Des Moines between 1856 and 1860, informs the writer that in 1859 by extra efforts and special inducements he secured for his paper during the political campaign a circulation of approximately 4,000, which was the high watermark up to that time. That circulation was extraordinary, however, lasting only during the campaign. The circulation of his Republican rival, *The Citizen*, as he recalls, ranged from 1,500 to 2,000. Interview with Mr. Porter, Des Moines, Nov. 17, 1908.



actions. Items are "run" and articles are reprinted usually as matters of news simply as indices to the direction of currents of popular interest. Sometimes, however, they are inserted and "headed" with set purpose and design to influence public opinion *pro* or *con*, as regards approaching party decisions on matters of policy or procedure. Moreover, editors frequently express opinions in their editorial columns that indicate what they would prefer to have and hope to see realized, rather than what they as a matter of fact really expect will come to pass. In the narrative which follows the editors cited for the most part express their views in their own words.

## 2. *First Expressions Respecting Party Principles and Candidates.*

The first expression in the press of Iowa in 1859 respecting the campaign in 1860 was elicited by one of the suggestions of the *New York Tribune*. In the second week of December<sup>1</sup> Greeley had proposed that the Republicans should nominate a candidate for Vice-President and the non-Republican opposition should nominate the head of the ticket—the only condition being that the nominee should definitely favor the restriction of slavery to the States then occupied. The *Louisville Journal* demurred and submitted a counter proposal—both wings of the opposition should assemble in Washington in separate conventions in the summer of 1860, the non-Republican opposition to engage to present a candidate for the Presidency on whom all could unite and the Republicans to do the same with respect to the second place—one whom all could "support with zeal and propriety." In outlining these proposals to his readers Mr. Hildreth observed (January 13): "It is plain that the time has not yet come for the different wings of the opposition to 'compare notes' with a view to selecting a Presidential candidate. But ingenious men will exercise their talents in this line and their efforts may be of some use in affording glimpses of the state of public senti-

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<sup>1</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.), Dec. 10, 1858.

ment." Concluding he makes the interesting assertion: "It has been assumed that the extreme abolition sentiment would bring into nomination Senator Seward for President and F. P. Stanton, the Kansas ex-Secretary and ex-Acting Governor, for Vice-President; but the declaration of Mr. Stanton, that Mr. Seward's extraordinary platform [Rochester speech] can find no endorsement from the people, condemns that theory."<sup>1</sup> At that time Mr. Hildreth, "down east" Yankee though he was, did not look with favor upon the nomination of the author of the Rochester speech.

A week later under "Notes From Washington" Mr. Hildreth reprints portions of the correspondence of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* (an Administration paper), stating that "Senator Seward and Governor Chase are the most talked of as the candidates for the Presidency among the Republicans. But F. P. Blair, Sr., is ardent for Colonel Fremont, who, with Frank Blair of Missouri for the Vice-Presidency the correspondent is inclined to think will prevail in the convention."<sup>2</sup> And in his next issue he notes that "a quarrel is going on among the Republican members there (Washington); a portion desire to take up the Douglas popular sovereignty doctrine, abandoning direct opposition to slavers, and invite the Douglas men, and southern as well as northern Americans to join them. Eli Thayer, of Mass., is one of the prominent advocates of this plan."<sup>3</sup> Two weeks later he notes that a political club has been formed to promote the candidacy of John M. Botts of Virginia for the Opposition's choice for standard bearer in 1860.<sup>4</sup> About the same time the editors of *The Montezuma Weekly Republican* make note of the assertion of the *New York Times* that "a new Republican movement" was under way that "may command attention. It is to make Colonel Fremont again the candidate, putting upon the ticket some live southern or southwestern man, like Blair of Missouri, who has ability, political courage and the advantage of living in a Slave State."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, Jan. 13, 1859,—Editorial "Presidential Discussions."

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.* Jan. 20, 1859. <sup>3</sup>*Ib.* Jan. 27, 1859. <sup>4</sup>*Ib.* Feb. 10, 1859.

<sup>5</sup>*The Montezuma Weekly Republican*, Jan. 20, 1859.

The first extended, explicit and serious expression relative to the approaching Presidential contest came from Burlington from the pen of Mr. Clark Dunham, editor of *The Daily Hawk-Eye*. On March 5, discussing "The Issue of 1860," he observed that no intelligent man could "fail to see" that "a very important crisis" was approaching.

There is but one question at issue . . . and that is the Negro question. To this question there can be but two parties.

On one side we have the party of Slavery, headed by vigilant, active, determined and desperate leaders, whose voice has heretofore ruled Congress. . . . If they fail in this [the extension of Slavery] they will do their utmost to bring about a dissolution of the Union and erect the Slave States into a Southern Republic.

On the other side the Republican party holds that Slavery is a creature of law, freedom being the normal condition of all men—that the Dred Scott decision is in violation of the constitution, policy of our government and spirit of our institutions, extra-judicial and therefore not binding—that Slavery has no legal existence outside of Slave States. That neither the Congress of the United States nor the people of the territories, deriving their powers from Congress, can enact Slave laws for the territories . . .

This is the issue before the country, and it is such an issue, so clearly defined, that there can be no third party.

Three facts stand out in Mr. Dunham's editorial that are observable in much of the discussion of the period. First, Slavery was believed to be foremost in the public mind as to which there could be (deery the necessity as many did, never so much) but two opinions and but two courses to follow. It was the iron wedge on which all other matters split. Second, the terrible earnestness of the Slavocrats and their willingness to proceed to desperate measures to accomplish their program is clearly apprehended. Third, there appears an obvious but little appreciated contradiction in the attitude of the Republicans towards the question of Slavery—Slavery was declared to be a creature of law, but the application of the doctrine under the Dred Scott decision is pronounced extra-judicial and subversive of the constitution.

During March the King-makers became active and vocal. In the latter part of the month the Republican press of St. Louis announced Edward Bates as a candidate for the Presi-

deney, asking his nomination by the National Republican Convention. Formal measures were taken to place him before the public and to promote his candidacy. The majority of the papers in Iowa, if they recognized it at all, merely made note of the announcement as a matter of news without comment, or with a collateral quotation of some favorable opinion of those favoring his candidacy.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Duham, however, expressed in plump, brief fashion an objection to the announcement—but gave no hint as to his real attitude towards Mr. Bates. Commenting upon the effort of the *Evening News* of St. Louis at “president making” he bluntly declared: “This is premature. It is too early yet to discuss the merits of candidates. And the success of Mr. Bates and other aspirants depends a good deal on their being kept out of the fight for some time to come.”<sup>2</sup> Two days later he reprints the remarks of Dr. Bailey of the *National Era* commending Salmon P. Chase as a suitable standard bearer for the Republicans in 1860.<sup>3</sup> A month later Mr. Hildreth referring to the Bates letter said: “His prospects for a nomination for the Presidency by the Republicans are not inferior to those of any statesman named. If nominated, he would most assuredly be elected.”<sup>4</sup>

The most interesting editorial item discoverable in March was the following from Mr. Mahin’s columns: “The Chicago *Democrat* strongly urges the nomination of Abe Lincoln for the Vice-Presidency by the Republican party, and thinks the ticket had better be headed by some southern man. It says: ‘We think it would aid us materially in establishing a national position, if we could run some southern man for the Presidency with Mr. Lincoln for Vice-President.’ *The Rockford Republican* takes the same ground.”<sup>5</sup>

In March Mr. John Teesdale, editor of *The Weekly Citizen* published at the State capital, visited Ohio in which State he had been influential as an editor and as a politician for twenty

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<sup>1</sup>See *The Gate City*, April 5, 1859. See also *The Davenport Weekly Gazette*, April 28, 1859; *The Keosauqua Weekly Republican*, April 9, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, April 14, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.* April 16, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, May 12, 1859.

<sup>5</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, March 29, 1859.

years (1837-1856), being between 1844-46 Private Secretary to Governor Bartley. While renewing old acquaintances, politics and the prospects of candidates for the Presidency were subjects of earnest inquiry. He sought to learn the drift and force of the currents there and Ohioans besought information as to the probable course of party preferences in Iowa. On his return to Des Moines he set forth (April 13) his views at some length under the caption, "Iowa and the Presidency." Mr. Teesdale at the time was State Printer and his paper was in a sense an official organ. At least his views were likely to differ but little from what he would regard as the prevalent opinion among the dominant men of his party as represented by the men holding official positions. His editorial is quoted at length.

Frequently during our absence from the State we were interrogated as to the Presidential preferences of Iowa. We uniformly answered that Iowa would be for the Republican nominee, beyond the shadow of a doubt; but we doubted whether any man could speak authoritatively, just now, as to her Presidential preferences. The press,—which usually affords unmistakable evidence of the setting of the public current—has thus far remained silent upon the question of the next Presidency. The silence is not the result of indifference, but of a purpose that pervades, as we believe, the Republican ranks of nearly every State, viz.: a purpose to sink all personal predilections in an effort to secure a candidate whose success will be beyond question. There is a deep and strong conviction that the next President will be a Republican. This conviction gains strength daily, with the increasing evidence of the disorganization and demoralization of the sham Democracy. Believing that there will be no difficulty in electing the Republican nominee, if he truly represents the Republican sentiment of the country, there is an all-pervading conviction that the nominee should be a man who is fully and fairly identified with the Republican organization; a man who has been tried; a man who has a national reputation, and who can be trusted in all possible contingencies, as an exponent of the friends of Freedom. If Iowa had the making of the President, she would, we believe, confer that honor upon William H. Seward, the peerless statesman, the incorruptible patriot. But, if in deference to the opinions and preferences of her sister States it becomes necessary to name another as the Republican standard bearer she will cheerfully support John McLean, Salmon P. Chase, Winfield Scott, John C. Fremont, John P. Hale, or any other among



the illustrious men who have attested their devotion to Republican principles. If a Pennsylvania candidate is needed, there is no man in whose behalf she would so cordially attest her devotion, as Galusha A. Grow. John Bell, and John J. Crittenden have a host of friends in Iowa, but before a union could be effected in behalf of either it would be necessary to know that they fully endorse the platform adopted by the last National Republican Convention.

When the proper time comes, Iowa will speak out, so that her personal preferences shall be understood; but her personal preferences will never be suffered to disturb the harmony of the Republican organization. She will be ready to fall into line for the nominee and give him her support with an earnestness that will not permit her to be regarded as debatable ground. At present there seems to be no urgent necessity for agitating the Presidential question. We have a State canvass on our hands which we mean to dispose of before devoting much space to the next Presidency. National questions will exert, as they should, a powerful influence in the coming State election. But Presidential preferences will have very little to do with the result.

There is much in the foregoing that anticipates subsequent discussion. First, like most politicians whose experience has been sufficient to teach prudence, Mr. Teesdale did not believe there was much benefit in crossing streams before coming to the bridges. Second, while he had decided personal preferences in respect of the candidate, he would not stand stoutly for his choice and none other regardless of contrary considerations affecting the party's success at the polls. Third, he was confident there was but little of the "rule or ruin" sentiment among the Republicans of the State with respect to the party's candidate. Fourth, an alliance with the non-Republican Opposition would be sanctioned if the coalition was arranged upon the basis of an explicit concurrence in and reaffirmation of the principles of the Philadelphia platform. Fifth, the doubtful States should determine the choice, if thereby victory would be rendered more probable.

Two days later (April 15) there came a vigorous pronouncement from Muscatine. Shortly before, the Opposition party in Tennessee had held a convention, adopted a State platform, and had put forward John Bell as a candidate for the Presidency in 1860, believing him to be one about whom all could rally in a common struggle to dislodge the Administra-

tion. Mr. Mahin viewed the platform as the draft of a protocol for a coalition, reprinted it entire and proceeded to subject its proposals to some sharp criticism under the caption "The Opposition in Tennessee—Can We Coalesce in 1860." It was a "sandwich platform" in his judgment and he gave it short shrift. The first resolution declaring the Union "the surest guaranty of the rights and interests of all sections" he branded as the "old clap-trap, dingy generality" which had become "familiar of late years as the heading of any special rascality which its author wished to cover up." The second proclaiming "our constitutional rights" as regards Slavery and thereupon insisting that the people in new territories "when they come to form a constitution and establish a State government shall decide the question of Slavery" he declared a palpable inconsistency, being merely "the Lecompton Slave Trading Democracy dressed up in Sunday clothes." The section advocating "a tariff adequate to the expenses of economical administration . . . with specific duties where applicable, discriminating in favor of American industries" he said pointedly "meant anything or nothing according to the section where read." The plank calling for a "reasonable extension of the period of probation now prescribed for the naturalization of foreigners and a more rigid enforcement of the law upon the subject" he asserted was alone "sufficient to ensure [the] prompt and contemptuous rejection [of the entire platform] by every Republican." Mr. Mahin concludes his editorial by announcing that the motto of the northern Republicans is—"No coalition and no compromises."<sup>1</sup> A week later in tendering "A Word of Advice" to Republicans relative to amalgamation with "less radical elements" he said "the Slavery question is now the only *real* issue between the two great parties of the country and it therefore behooves us to maintain a bold and decided stand upon it."<sup>2</sup>

Three facts are noteworthy in Mr. Mahin's expressions. First, the effect of Lincoln's Freeport questions that made juggling with "popular sovereignty" impossible, is realized. Second, he strikes at the proposed extension of the probation-

<sup>1</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, April 15, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.* April 21, 1859.

ary period in naturalization with vigor, voicing a protest that a few weeks later became almost universal throughout the northwest States when the Massachusetts Amendment set the Germans on fire. Third, the cardinal fact in discussion, the fact that could not be ignored or minimized, was Slavery.

The announcement of Mr. Bates as a candidate for the Republican nomination for the Presidency resulted forthwith in sundry efforts to draw from him by way of interviews, letters and speeches, expressions of his views on the issues in debate. Of several statements made by him the most serious was an extended letter to a committee of Whigs of New York City. His position upon the subject of Slavery was virtually *laissez faire, laissez passer*, let it alone and enforce the law and time will work the cure of the iniquities of the institution. His statement, although conceded to be "able and interesting," did not strike Mr. Howell of Keokuk favorably, a portion of his editorial comment being:

The nigger question he spends but few words upon. He would ignore it altogether, and get rid of it by leaving it alone. But Mr. Bates should have sense enough to see that it is so linked in with the rights of man at large, and the interest and ambitions of men in particular, that it has made *itself* conspicuous and cannot be got rid of by not looking at it or in any other way but some sort of a definite and satisfactory settlement. The spirit of Mr. Bates' letter is patriotic and sound but it does not show him to be such a plain-dealing and thorough-going statesman as the times demand. It is futile to mention his name again in connection with the Presidency.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. J. B. Dorr's reference to the announcement from St. Louis indicated clearly the attitude that the Democrats would maintain towards the candidacy of Mr. Bates. He merely noted: "Many of the Know-Nothing organs have already hoisted his name at the head of their columns and some of the Republican papers have done the same."<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of many, if not a majority, of experienced editors and party leaders towards political candidacies is exhibited in clear fashion in the editorial expressions of two influential editors in central eastern Iowa in the latter days

<sup>1</sup>*The Gate City*, April 21, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Express and Herald* (Dubuque), April 23, 1859.

of April respecting two prominent Ohioans, Salmon P. Chase and Benjamin F. Wade. Personal preferences and party plans and success may coincide; but in case they do not, the exigencies of a political contest must needs prevail over the personal inclination of the admirers and friends of this or that aspirant or candidate. Mr. Add. H. Sanders, editor of *The Davenport Gazette*, on April 28, declared himself as follows:

We are glad to see that the name of Gov. Chase *is* becoming intimately associated in public discussion with the next nomination of the Republican party for the Presidency. No man has been mentioned in connection with this high position, as the candidate of a party in 1860, who combines in himself higher qualifications for the position, and a more consistent political or pure personal history than Governor Chase . . .

In thus speaking of Gov. Chase we have merely availed ourselves of an opportunity of expressing opinion of a man who in every position has sustained the confidence of his friends and his own self-respect. We advocate as a Republican paper the claims of no man for the nomination of the next Republican National Convention. We have, indeed, heard no name suggested for this nomination as a Republican candidate for the Presidency in 1860, which we would not cheerfully support and with that zeal which ever marks our course when sustaining good men backed by good principles. We believe, however, that no Republican combines greater elements of popularity with less objectionable qualities, than Gov. Chase—in other words, that no Republican would make a better race. . . .

Two days later Mr. S. S. Daniels, editor of *The Tipton Advertiser*, discussing “The Next Presidential Contest” said among other things:

We do not intend to discuss the merits of the different men for the office of President and are willing to vote for any of the men who have been named for that office. At the same time we would like much to see Hon. Frank Wade, U. S. Senator from Ohio, brought out as our next candidate. Mr. Wade occupies a very favorable position before the American people; he has never taken *ultra* grounds, while he has ever stood up for the right, and has done it in such a way that none have ever dared to oppose him as they have many others. Frank Wade is *excepted* when wholesale charges are made against the Republicans; he has made many speeches but they were all good; he has said nor done nothing which will injure him in any way.

It is not uninteresting to note that Messrs. Sanders and Daniels were both, prior to coming to Iowa, residents of Ohio, hence doubtless their predilection for the distinguished sons of that State.

### 3. *The Reception of Greeley's Suggestion for a Coalition of the Opposition.*

Meantime there had been a pronouncement, as it were, *ex cathedra*. For the greater part of two years the *New York Tribune* had been urging, with a view to the contest in 1860, the elements of the Opposition to pursue a policy of conciliation and concession relative to each other, to combine on matters of common agreement and ignore the collateral issues peculiar to groups or sections, however important they might seem to them severally, but which were minor and subsidiary as respects the central and predominant issue and if urged would make for dissension and defeat. The paramount demand of the Opposition, north and south, was the maintenance of Freedom in the non-slave States and the restriction of Slavery within its original or then established limits. Victory in the approaching contest depended upon the dislodgment of Slavocracy from seats of authority and this end could not be achieved except by concentration and simultaneous forward movement of all available forces in a common attack. The ambitions of leaders were immaterial and like local interests and particular "isms" should and must give way to the imperative demands of the situation. Greeley had urged Republicans to support Douglas after he broke with the Administration over the Lecompton Constitution. He opposed the candidacy of Lincoln against Douglas for the Senate, and during the debates maintained a stubborn editorial silence. Immediately upon their conclusion he reiterated his belief that wisdom favored his original suggestion, lodging some sharp criticisms against Lincoln's tactics in the canvass.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, at short intervals he renewed his contention that a coalition was imperative, insisting that common sense and

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<sup>1</sup>*N. Y. Tribune (w.)*, Nov. 27, 1858.



prudence enjoined it.<sup>1</sup> In a long editorial entitled "The Presidency in 1860," (April 26) he restated the grounds for his position. "We do not deem it necessary again to contradict the rumors from time to time set afloat that we are laboring to nominate and elect A, B or C. The single end we keep in mind is the triumph of our principles . . . . In the last Presidential contest the votes of the American people were divided as follows:

Buchanan, 1,838,232; Fremont, 1,341,514; Fillmore, 874,707; Fremont and Fillmore over Buchanan, 377,989.

"Of course it is plain that a substantial, practical union of the electors who supported Fremont and Fillmore respectively insures a triumph in 1860, even though there should be a scaling off on either side, as there possibly would be. We can afford to lose one hundred thousand of the Opposition vote in 1856 and still carry the next President by a handsome majority." After pointing out that there was no essential variance among the Whigs and the native Americans respecting Slavery he says concerning candidates: "Most certainly we should prefer an original Republican—Governor Seward or Governor Chase—but we shall heartily and zealously support one like John Bell, Edward Bates, or John M. Botts, provided that we are assured that his influence, his patronage, his power, if chosen President will be used not to extend Slavery but to confine it to the States that see fit to uphold it." The editorial closes with the words: "When speech tends to irritate and distract, unspeakable is the wisdom of silence."

This was the language of common sense, the language of men who canvass their experiences and are governed by the lessons which they enjoin and enforce. But sensible though the editorial was, its suggestions drew forth sharp rejoinders. The assertion that *The Tribune* would heartily support Bell, Bates or Botts at once aroused the Germans of Iowa and

<sup>1</sup>See *Ib.* (s. w.), "Union of the Opposition," Dec. 10, 1858; "The Opposition in 1860," Jan. 4, 1859; "The Presidency," Jan. 18. In the latter the charge that *The Tribune* is opposing Seward is denied.

The assumption above (and subsequently) that Horace Greeley penned the editorials defining the attitude of *The Tribune* towards the Republican Presidential nomination may be subject to question, as Charles A. Dana was Greeley's *alter ego* and frequently had entire charge of that paper. Nevertheless there seems to be grounds for thinking that Greeley probably struck the dominant notes and gave direction to the editorial policy. Dana, however, concurred and heartily supported his chief. See Gen. Jas. H. Wilson's *Life of Charles A. Dana*, pp. 161-2.

thence of the entire country. All three men were considered to be tainted with Know-Nothingism by reason of their public support of Fillmore in 1856 and were further deemed to be in close association with the leaders of the American party. In the furious reaction against the Massachusetts Amendment that ensued in the next three months the Democrats and Germans alike cited the editorial as proof of their contention that the Republicans had natural affiliations and a virtual alliance with the anti-foreign propagandists.<sup>1</sup> Greeley's insistence upon a coalition of the entire Opposition on the basis of non-extension of Slavery elicited some slashing criticisms.

On the same day Greeley's editorial appeared, Mr. Dunham gave expression to sentiment directly in conflict with the major suggestion of *The Tribune*. On April 22, *The Press and Tribune* of Chicago had set forth what it deemed the correct position for the Republican party to take in the campaign in 1860. Commending the views of his contemporary, Mr. Dunham observed: "The views there advanced are not entirely original, being in substance those advanced by Mr. Lincoln in the late senatorial canvass, and more recently by Senator Seward in his great speech on the destiny of our country; . . ." The true basis for the Opposition, he contended, is principle and not the petty partizan considerations that masquerade under the name of "policy." But in the large there is a concurrence of principle and policy—a fact that discerning statesmen and experienced political chiefs realize and aim at in practical politics. The Republican party came into existence because it placed principles and rights before expediency and Mammon; and its strength and success in the approaching contest would so depend. "As a party of principle . . . it has attained its present high position, and shall it now abandon its positive existence, animated by strong principles, and become a negative party, held together only by the spoils, and vainly seeking to alter its course to suit every trifling circumstance. Better, always, defeat with honor, than victory with disgrace. So-called conservatives

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<sup>1</sup>See writer's detailed account, *Annals of Iowa*, 3d Series, Vol. 8, pp. 206-213.

over-fearful of what is termed *sectional*, and trembling at the empty threats of southern fire-eaters, are apt even to yield what is right, forgetting that right should be supported, even though it be sectional." Greeley's contention that the Opposition would lessen its strength, and invite defeat, by taking a radical, "sectional" stand upon Slavery that would alienate large numbers normally hostile to the principles and policies of the Administration, was not anticipated or met by Mr. Dunham.

Greeley's views, however, met immediately with direct and emphatic rejoinders. One of the most interesting and vigorous came from the pen of Thomas Drummond of Vinton, a veritable Hotspur in the journalism and politics of the period. He was a Virginian by birth and education and this fact no doubt accounts in considerable measure for the vigor and vivacity of his utterances. He took direct issue with Greeley's proposal for an alliance of the Opposition. His expressions are so typical of the sentiments of the aggressive opponents of Slavery, who were at the time staunch Republican partizans, that his editorial "Spoils or Principles in 1860" is given at considerable length:

The Republican party is not yet quite four years old . . .

Unfortunately the party is just now cursed with a lot of officious political mid-wives . . . who, when it is in perfect health and only awaits its appointed time, are throwing themselves into an agony of apprehension about its safety and insist on doctoring and prescribing for it. Their headquarters are in New York and Horace Greeley of the *New York Tribune* is their chief. It really seems to us the deliberate purpose of that paper to prevent a Republican victory if possible . . .

It is the professed aim of *The Tribune* and its co-laborers to bring about an alliance of what is termed the "entire opposition" to the Democratic party which would embrace Republicans, Know-Nothings, Southern Whigs and Douglas Democrats . . . This we hold is impossible and, if possible unwise and foolish in the extreme. Success at such a price would be barren of good results. . . .

What is the position, what are the doctrines of that body of so-called Conservatives for whose co-operation with them, such strenuous efforts are now being made by Eastern Republicans? We leave out of account the Douglas Democrats, as a miserable Falstaffian rabble, not worth looking after, and answer, they are mainly a class of men who are wedded to the past, old fogies who cling like

Crittenden and Bates to the recollections and teachings of a former age. . . .

The basis of Republicanism is its recognition and advocacy of the "inalienable rights of man" and its purpose, a steady and unceasing opposition to Slavery extension, and to the very existence of the institution itself. . . . This at least is Western Republicanism, and the party in the West is not to be sold out by its professed brethren in the East. The attempt to do so met with a signal rebuke last Fall in Illinois and will fail as signally if attempted a year hence. The nomination of Bates or Crittenden or any of their associates as candidates for the Presidency, or any emasculation of its platform will be the signal for a revolt of the genuine old Anti-Slavery element of the party, that which has been its very life blood; and its organization upon the platform of eternal antagonism to Slavery in the territories or elsewhere.

The Republican party adopts what the *New York Herald* terms "the bloody, brutal manifesto" of Abraham Lincoln, as re-echoed by Senator Seward, that there is and must be a steady conflict between Slavery and Freedom until one or the other goes to the wall—until this Union becomes all slave or all free.<sup>1</sup>

Two weeks later he expressed his satisfaction anent the fact that "the persistent efforts of certain eastern Republicans and their organs to pave the way for a coalition of all the odds and ends . . . are meeting with small favor in the great Northwest."<sup>2</sup> About the same time Mr. Frank W. Palmer expressed similar sentiments in *The Times* of Dubuque: "'Conservative' men everywhere North as well as South, may plot and plan as much as they please. There will be no half-and-half ticket in 1860. . . . If the old Whigs and Americans are ready to co-operate with Republicans . . . there may be a Union . . . but any attempt by a lot of conservative old fogies to patch up a platform in which Northern Republicans will occupy an indifferent or even a secondary position, will prove a disgraceful failure."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Charles Aldrich, on the contrary did not concur with his contemporaries in repelling the suggestion of *The Tribune* but gave it his favor, if we may so conclude from his reprinting without adverse comment the major part of Greeley's editorial urging fusion, including those portions referring to Bell, Bates and Botts.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Eagle*, May 10, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*The Hamilton Freeman*, May 14, 1859.

About the same time Mr. Teesdale gave expression to sentiments that illustrate the vague and variable distinctions that northern anti-slavery Republicans were prone to insist upon in their attitude toward southern anti-slavery sympathizers of the Clay school. Commenting upon the course of Crittenden who had but recently given public endorsement to the candidacy of Joshua F. Bell for Governor of Kentucky on the Whig ticket, he says:

Mr. Crittenden has just taken a step that effectually bars all hope of his nomination for the Presidency by a Republican convention. He has endorsed Mr. Bell, the American, or Opposition candidate for Governor of Kentucky. Mr. Bell is a pro-slavery man; and, like Goggin of Virginia, seeks to outstrip the Democratic nominee, in his professions of allegiance to slavery and the Slave Power. Deeply do we deplore this step of Mr. C. He has a host of friends in the free states who honored him for the manly stand he took in opposition to the Lecompton fraud, and in favor of the rights of Kansas. It is clear that Mr. Crittenden does not expect a position in the presidential arena; and equally clear that all attempts to secure Southern support, by ignoring the great issue before the American people, is worse than vain. "It is worse than a crime; it is a blunder," . . . If we would command respect . . . we must stand up for the political faith delivered to the fathers of the Republic. Their politics was a part of their religion, and their religion was a part of their politics. They knew no policy inconsistent with a proper recognition of the rights of man.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Teesdale's attitude in May was not exactly consistent with his position in April. He does not specify that Senator Crittenden had made himself impossible or unavailable as a candidate because of his "Americanistic" affiliations in Kentucky,—a consideration that properly would have had great weight in the North; but he contends that his endorsement of a man who did not violently oppose Slavery, but asserted its right to be where it was found, was fatal to his nomination. Crittenden's position on Slavery had not varied. He did not approve of Slavery as an ideal condition in theory or in the concrete, he did not desire to encourage its growth, and he did not promote its extension. His opposition to the Lecompton constitution demonstrated that he was "more of a patriot and less of a politician." Let Slavery alone where

<sup>1</sup>*The Weekly Citizen*, May 8, 1859.



it was,—keep it where it was,—respect the rights of the owners of slaves,—do not constantly agitate the question and disturb the peace of mind of those who possess such property, no matter how undesirable human chattels may be in abstract ethics or difficult of adjustment in practical affairs. The South should not be a subject of constant “assault.” If we except the inconsistency of the Republican denunciation of the Dred Scott decision and their valorous insistence upon the sacredness of the national constitution and the rights of Slavocrats south of the Ohio, Crittenden’s position on Slavery squared with the views of nine Republicans out of ten in the North.<sup>1</sup>

The second quarter of the year closed with an expression from Mr. Howell in *The Gate City* respecting the candidacy of Simon Cameron that voiced an opinion that became very common among prudent politicians of much discernment and experience. Noting the fact that “Lately the Republican press of Pennsylvania has been rapidly coalescing upon him,” he says, “With no disposition to recommend candidates at this early period, we may say, however, that Pennsylvania and Illinois will be the battle-ground of the next campaign. There *are* men for whom those two States can be carried. But they are very few. These two plain facts will go very far and should go very far towards limiting the range of speculation concerning candidates.”<sup>2</sup> Victory perches on the standards of those who command effective forces at the crucial points—and such were the doubtful States.

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<sup>1</sup>Coleman’s *Life of John J. Crittenden*, Vol. II, p. 154, et seq.—Passim.

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, June 28, 1859.

4—*Expressions July-December.*

Public discussion proceeds like the tides and waves of the ocean, now flowing, accumulating and surging, then receding and ebbing to the point of quiescence. Following the general expression of party opinion in the forepart of 1859, respecting the primary political issues and the comment relative to the availability and chances of the several Republican champions mentioned or urged as desirable candidates for the Presidency, both public and party interest in the subject fell to a low ebb.

During the summer and fall the majority of the party papers in Iowa scarcely mentioned the presidential succession at all. One searches in vain for any personal editorial interest in the approaching national campaign in the columns of *The News* of Boone, *The Intelligencer* of St. Charles, *The Journal* of Elkader, *The Ledger* of Fairfield, *The Guardian* of Independence, *The Visitor* of Indianola, *The Pioneer* of Leon, *The Advocate* of Lyon City, *The Linn County Register* of Marion, *The Visitor* of Marengo, *The Express* of Marietta, *The Republican* of Montezuma, *The Courier* of Ottumwa, *The Hamilton Freeman* of Webster City, and *The Black Hawk Courier* of Waterloo. Most of them do not even reprint articles from the eastern press anent candidates or issues. Mr. Teesdale's prediction in April was verified literally. Local matters and news, the state election and general subjects of national or international moment apparently completely absorbed public interest. The same may be said for the most part of the Republican press in the larger cities. Expression of editorial opinion was rare and little or no attention was given the matter in the way of reprints of articles or pithy paragraphs dealing with the men or measures with which political debate was soon to be chiefly concerned. It was not until the middle

of November, when the returns from the state elections were definitely known and the nature of the party prospects began to appear with some distinctness against the political horizon, that editors began again to indicate a definite interest in the approaching presidential contest and to express opinions indicative of personal convictions. There were, however, a few expressions between July and November worth noting.

(a) Ethics, Law and Fugitive Slaves.

In the forepart of July Mr. John Edwards, editor of *The Patriot*, of Chariton, declared a sentiment of no little significance in view of the bitter controversies in Congress and in the country at large over the apprehension of fugitive slaves. A judge in Ohio had but shortly before been defeated for re-nomination by the Republican state convention of that State because of a decision by him sustaining the constitutionality and enforcing the provisions of the Fugitive Slave law in arrest of a fugitive. After pronouncing the action of the convention "an egregious blunder" Mr. Edwards said:

We opine a large majority of the Republicans coincide with Judge Swan and would sustain him in his decision. Not that they do not regard the Fugitive Slave act as very odious, unjust and revolting to every sentiment of humanity and civil liberty; but that it is the law of the land, and sworn judges decided the law to be constitutional. "Whatever may be lawful is not always expedient." The wisest course to pursue is not to throw any obstruction in the way of the enforcement of the law by those who may voluntarily lend their aid to its enforcement. But use all constitutional means to have such an atrocious law repealed in a legal way as soon as possible. Whilst no power on earth could compel us to violate our conscience by engaging under this law to capture runaway slaves, yet at the same time if others could be found to engage in that business, we would not interfere in any unlawful manner to obstruct its legal operation.

"The above," observed Mr. Clark Dunham of Burlington, on reprinting in *The Hawk-Eye*, "expresses our sentiments exactly. . . . We believe Judge Swan's was a righteous decision

under an unrighteous law."<sup>1</sup> About a month later Samuel J. Kirkwood, as a candidate for governor declared himself in virtually the same terms in response to an interrogatory of Gen. Augustus C. Dodge in their gubernatorial debate at Oskaloosa. General Dodge advanced the logic of a citizen's duty under known law a step farther in his counter response to Kirkwood's cross question—Would he, Dodge, assist in catching a slave—by saying “. . . I would do whatever the law requires.”<sup>2</sup>

The concurrence of Messrs. Dunham and Kirkwood in the view of Mr. Edwards and their disinclination to accept and act upon the doctrine of Gen. Dodge, strikingly illustrates the basic differences and subtleties in the attitudes of the respective disputants towards the major fact in public discussion. Property in human chattels, or Slavery, however abhorrent in and of itself, was an institution sanctioned by age and by positive law. The Republicans constantly declared it to be a creature of law. The constitution of the nation recognized it; the construction and ratification of that instrument being possible only upon the complete recognition of the rights of slaveholders. The Republicans proclaimed their loyal adherence to that supreme statute. The ethics

<sup>1</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, July 15, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, Aug. 3, 1859.

The reported questions and answers and rejoinders are worth reproduction. After contending that the Fugitive Slave law was “part and parcel of the constitution,” Gen. Dodge then said:

“Mr. Kirkwood, would you obey the Fugitive Slave law?” Mr. K. replied, “I would not resist the enforcement of that law, but before I would aid in capturing a fugitive slave I would suffer the penalty of the law, but I would not aid in carrying it into execution.”

Mr. K. returned the compliment and asked Gen. Dodge if he would assist in catching a slave. Gen. Dodge replied, “I would; I would do whatever the law requires me to do.”

The following from one intimately associated with his political life when his fame was becoming nation-wide forcefully indicates the attitude and the outspokenness of Mr. Lincoln on this sore point in the discussion of slavery:

“At the time I first knew him it was irksome to very many of his friends to be told that there ought to be an efficient fugitive slave law. But it was his conviction as a lawyer that there ought to be one, and he never failed to say so when interrogated, or when occasion required that that subject should be touched upon. And it is a fact that Abolitionists like Lovejoy and Coddington would take this from Lincoln without murmuring, when they would not take it from anybody else. He never would echo the popular cry: “No more slave States!” Whenever this subject was discussed he would say that if a territory having the requisite population and belonging to us should apply for admission to the Union without fraud or constraint, yet with slavery, he could not see any other disposition to be made of her than to admit her.” Mr. Horace White: Introduction to Herndon and Weik's *Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. I, p. 25.

of the law thereunder clearly enjoined the enforcement of the rights of owners of slaves. The barbarities incident to Slavery, hideous and deplorable as they were, did not *ipso facto* disturb their rights any more than the misuse or abuse of any other form of animate property invalidates an owner's right to its full use and recovery in case of escape. Property consisting of slaves possessed all of the attributes of movable property. It was allowable under the constitution to transport them from place to place with all the right thereto accompanying in full rigor. The furious denunciation of the Dred Scott decision *per se*, the constant, insidious and underground violation of the Fugitive Slave law and the widespread open opposition to its enforcement in the North, the gross tergiversation of Republicans (and of Northern Democrats too) in respect of so-called "Squatter Sovereignty" (or "Popular Sovereignty" as its advocates preferred to call it) and the anarchy inherent in Douglas' answer to Lincoln's question at Freeport—all these palpable inconsistencies in conduct and doctrine finally drove such Southern leaders as Jefferson Davis to sanction disunion and attempt secession.

The concurrence furthermore of Messrs. Edwards, Dunham and Kirkwood affords us an interesting illustration of how factors with contrary antecedents may coalesce and later pursue divergent courses. Mr. Edwards' view was obnoxious to abolitionists, to militant churchmen, and to radical anti-slavery men among the Republicans. Yet we find all three men were pronounced or rather denounced as radical anti-slavery partisans by the Democratic press. Mr. Edwards was a Kentuckian by birth and education, whose discontent with Slavery was so great that he emigrated to a free state and emancipated the slaves that he inherited from his father's estate. Mr. Kirkwood was a Marylander whose father and brothers owned slaves. Mr. Dunham was a scion of Puritan stock of the bluest blood, a Vermonter by birth, who had been reared among Southern folk in Licking county, Ohio; for fourteen years editing *The Newark Weekly Gazette*. All three men regarded themselves, and were so regarded by their party associates as "conservatives" with respect to the slavery question. The



position which they took was almost identical with that taken by Judge Bates of St. Louis, when his candidacy for the Presidency was announced in March preceding and consistently maintained thenceforward, the latter more nearly coinciding with Gen. Dodge. In the party preliminaries soon to follow Mr. Dunham finally became an advocate of the nomination of Senator Seward of New York; Mr. Edwards urged the nomination of Senator Cameron of Pennsylvania; and Governor Kirkwood finally threw his influence in behalf of Abraham Lincoln.

(b) An Appeal to Local Pride Rejected.

In the middle of August *The Press and Tribune* of Chicago in a leading article advanced an argument that one frequently encounters in partisan discussion in politics—an argument that is minor in importance and rarely decisive, but one which may exert more or less influence when other considerations are evenly balanced. It was in brief a direct appeal to local pride or prejudice as one may prefer to put it. The editor of that journal had been scanning the almanacs and official blue books and had found that the West had been in political “vassalage” to the East and for years had been “denied” her proper weight in the councils of the nation. He showed that except for a period of 30 days the West had never had a President; had never had a Vice-President, not even a candidate; had had but one of 23 Secretaries of State; but two of the 18 Postmasters-General (John McLean in 1833 being the last); not one of the 26 Attorneys-General; but two of the 31 Secretaries of War; not one of the Secretaries of the Navy. Since the foundation of the government the West had had but 8 out of 151 Secretaries of the President’s Cabinet; but one of 26 Speakers of the House of Representatives; and but one Judge of the Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup>

“These facts will surprise the western readers,” remarked Mr. Teesdale, “and justify the indignant commentary of *The Tribune*; and vindicate the conclusion that it is high time the great West, with its teeming population and vast interests,

<sup>1</sup>*The Press and Tribune*, Chicago, Aug. 16, 1859: summary taken from *The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Aug. 24, 1859.

received more consideration at the hands of political organizations. . . .” Mr. Teesdale then proceeds to discuss the significance of the editorial and the wisdom of acting on its suggestion. His language, its tone and substance, illustrates the views of probably the majority of the Republican editors in Iowa in 1859:

We do not understand exactly what *The Tribune* would be at, except that it wants a western President. Its choice is not designated. Having expressed its conviction that the time has not yet come for designating personal preferences, we shall probably be left in doubt, for a time, whether McLean, Chase, Bates, or Lincoln is the favorite.

While admitting the force of the facts presented by *The Tribune*, and the general truthfulness of its conclusions, we believe that the sentiment of Iowa may be thus expressed: Give us the right man, and it is a matter of little moment where he comes from. We are one people, and so ought to remain forever. All other considerations being equal, we may consider locality. If the West has the right man for the place, and he can bring the assurance of success, as fully as any other, there should be a union of western strength in his favor.

A letter written at St. Louis, for the *Springfield Republican*, is copied in the *N. Y. Tribune*. It is designed to give prominence to the name of Mr. Bates, as a western candidate for the Presidency. If its testimony may be relied upon, Mr. Bates occupies the right position on the great question before the people. His faith is evidenced by his works. Looking at Slavery from the right moral and political standpoint, he never could lend the sanction of a name that is the synonym for patriotism and integrity, to the wicked policy of the Slavery Propagandists. But if Mr. Bates cannot secure Missouri or any other slave state, and is not as strong as some others in Ohio, or New York, or Pennsylvania, or New England,—where we must secure success—then Mr. Bates is not the man.<sup>1</sup>

(c) Pre-Election Expressions—and Judge Bates.

The exigencies of a strenuous state campaign now absorbed the energies of editors almost exclusively. Early in August *The DeWitt Standard* declared itself an advocate of the nomination of Wm. H. Seward for President and of Cassius M. Clay for Vice-President; and in the common phrase of the day “nailed their names to his mast head”: but the announcement seems to have elicited no comment favorable or unfavor-

<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Aug. 24, 1859.

able; indeed for the most was not noticed so far as the writer has observed.<sup>1</sup> No other expressions of consequence are discoverable prior to the elections in November. In the columns of *The Gate City* we find (Aug. 20) a sketch of Simon Cameron originally appearing in his organ at Harrisburg, in connection with the announcement of his candidacy for the Presidency; and (Sept. 3) Judge Bates' letter to a committee of a mass meeting of the Opposition party in Memphis; neither is accompanied by editorial comment. Mr. Dunham reprints two extracts from the *N. Y. Times* denying that Col. Fremont had written a letter refusing to be a candidate: "Presidential letter-writing is not his specialty; he leaves that for the amusement of those who have a taste for knocking out their brains in this particular way." In the same issue Mr. Dunham notes that Mr. Washington Hunt and *The National Intelligencer* had announced that they would support Judge Bates.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Hildreth glances at the national political horizon and canvasses the outlook. "The chances are about even between the two parties for carrying the next Presidency," he concludes, and dwells on the doubtful states and their strategic importance.<sup>3</sup> Briefly noting that "the claims" of Edward Bates were being "pressed by a number of journals," Mr. Jacob Rich of Independence observes noncommittally: "Mr. Bates has long been strongly anti-slavery in sentiment, but has never acted with the Republican party other than giving his sympathies and support to the emancipationists of Missouri. If his friends can satisfy the country of his cordial sympathy with the Republican movement he will prove a strong competitor for the nomination."<sup>4</sup>

Discussion waxed but little during November until the latter weeks. *The Daily Hawk-Eye* reprinted without comment an extract from Gov. Chase's speech at Sandusky, Ohio, on the 20th ultimo, strongly urging the "union" of all elements of the Opposition "for the contest of 1860":<sup>5</sup> and later under the caption, "An Important Political Document," extended extracts of a statement then recently published in

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.* <sup>2</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Oct. 18, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*The St. Charles Intelligencer*, Oct. 20, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>*The Guardian*, Oct. 27, 1859.

<sup>5</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Nov. 2, 1859.

*The News* of St. Louis purporting to be an authoritative statement of Judge Bates' views upon the moot questions affecting the presidential succession.<sup>1</sup> *The Excelsior* of Maquoketa gives its readers two and a half columns of the same and commends it strongly.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Teesdale asserted that "in the main" his sentiments were "such as every intelligent man must heartily endorse," and resident as he was in a northern slave state "his views are of marked significance."<sup>3</sup>

The columns of *The Gate City* contain several articles indicative of alert public interest in the candidacy of Judge Bates and the proper course for the party to pursue in the matter of selecting the candidate. The statement given out at St. Louis by *The News*, it asserts, was not "authoritative" but as there was no denial Mr. Howell presumes that its expressions were "substantially" in accord with his sentiments; but he is non-committal as respects his own views or feelings toward Judge Bates. In the same issue, in another editorial, headed "Presidential Candidates," he makes some pointed and pithy suggestions, without reference to particular persons or candidates, but evidently with regard to certain developments in the drifts of discussion.<sup>4</sup>

The Republicans everywhere are more anxious for the success of the ticket than for the nomination of their friends, and we believe fully understand that no intrigue, no trick to force a man upon the party could by hardly any possibility be successful in the convention, while the tolerable certainty of a defeat would await him before the people. The present opportunity to obtain power, the possibility of retaining it, a successful administration of public affairs upon Republican principles, everything, conspires to demand a politic and satisfactory nomination, and a considerate and candid examination of the merits and demerits of the several candidates. And all this is generally appreciated. Particularly will this spirit display itself in the national convention. Success, and success with a sound man, we feel convinced is the spirit which will reign with an overwhelming power in that body. Let all the local interests and particular facts, however, be freely ventilated before its assembling, that the members, when they come together, may be as well informed as they can be, and as well qualified as possible to render a sound judgment.

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.*, Nov. 15, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Weekly Maquoketa Excelsior*, Nov. 29, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Nov. 23, 1859. <sup>4</sup>*The Gate City*, Nov. 18, 1859.

Three days later Mr. Howell summarizes for his readers the comments of the leading journals of New York City upon Judge Bates' statement. William Cullen Bryant's paper, *The Evening Post*, looked upon it as "clear" and "so far as it goes quite satisfactory, except that his urgency in favor of an effective fugitive slave law is unnecessary and not altogether to the taste of the North." Mr. Bennett's paper *The Herald*, looks on the pronouncement with favor and thinks that "Mr. Bates on the score of 'Nationality' especially, would be a strong man for the Republicans." Mr. James Watson Webb's *The Courier and Enquirer*, then or later a prominent promoter of Senator Seward's candidacy, plumply declared that if the "Republican convention of 1860 should nominate any such Fillmore disorganizer as Bates he will be defeated by the Republican party, and will deserve defeat." Greeley's *Tribune*, while asserting that the statement did "not entirely accord with its own views, it is the soundest, clearest and most forceful expression upon the slavery question yet put forth by the so-called 'conservative' sentiment of the country and wishes that a copy of it might be put in the hands of every voter who can read in the country." *The Times* thought that it agreed in "every essential point with the ground taken by the Republican party at Pittsburgh and Philadelphia."<sup>1</sup> To the insinuation that Judge Bates' anti-slavery views were sprouts of feeble or recent growth, Mr. Howell pointed out that he was a native of Virginia, a son of Quaker stock on both sides "known for nearly a century for their religious hostility" to Slavery and quotes the *Washington Star* that declares his views to be "hereditary and to be respected, not being the result of a demagogue's ambition."<sup>2</sup>

Up to this time so far as the writer can discover no positive predictions as to the candidate who would be nominated had been made. Editors were either indifferent, or prudent or skeptical as to the outlook. One editor at Garnavillo, in northeastern Iowa, Mr. Joseph Eiboeck, an alert, ambitious young German, who had but shortly before assumed control

<sup>1</sup>*The Gate City*, Nov. 23, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.*, Nov. 24, 1859.



of *The Journal*, looked at the political situation and ventured a prophecy which was in some part fulfilled. In his judgment Messrs. Bates and Seward were the most prominent Republican candidates; and Pierce, Buchanan and Douglas the leading Democratic candidates. "From these it is very probable that Mr. Bates will be the most favored, and Pierce the leading Democratic nominee. . . . Douglas will perhaps obtain the support of most of the Northern States . . . but the South will oppose and thus defeat him. . . . Wm. H. Seward will stand no chance with Bates, for reasons that are known to everyone. Seward like Clay is a great man but he never will be President of the United States."<sup>1</sup>

The editorial has a special significance in the fact that Mr. Eiboeck was a German and wrote for a constituency largely German. Within two months, notwithstanding Judge Bates' course in the campaign of 1856, supporting Fillmore and giving support to sundry doctrines of the "American" party, and his attitude toward the Fugitive Slave law, Mr. Eiboeck explicitly advocated the nomination of Judge Bates by the national Republican convention.<sup>2</sup>

(d) Mr. Teesdale's Review of the Situation.

November closed with another extended and vigorous expression from Mr. Teesdale, who kept a very alert, discerning eye upon the political horizon, reviewing recent developments, pointing out the vital issues and the conditions of the party's success, the occasion that impelled the expression apparently being some recent observations of *The Press and Tribune* of Chicago, which he combats. "A glorious uncertainty prevails," he begins, "as to the men who are likely to enjoy the honor of leading the Republican hosts to victory in the next presidential canvass." The *Chicago Tribune* declared that the selection should be determined by the exigencies in the states the Republicans lost in 1856—the main question before the convention will be, who can carry Illinois, Indiana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, or the last without reference to the other three. "The convention may be able to settle this ques-

<sup>1</sup>*The Journal*, Nov. 21, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.*, Feb. 13, 1860.

tion satisfactorily, without being a particle nearer success than when it commenced its labors." Simon Cameron might carry Pennsylvania and endanger success in "unalterably Republican states." The nomination "of Mr. Lincoln might secure Illinois, beyond peradventure, but is there not a possibility" that it would endanger old Republican states? The late elections demonstrated that every free state save California was safely Republican if the party's "nominees be men of the right stamp." They should be "men who have been tried as by fire, on the great issues before the country. . . . Anything short of this will not meet the expectations of the awakened masses. To award the honors . . . to mere camp-followers, eleventh-hour men, to the neglect of those who have borne the heat and burden of the fight, is a policy destructive of all political organization. . . . Yet there is a strong inclination, we fear, to do this very thing. Against it we would raise our voice now, and all the time." The recent election in New York clearly indicated that Mr. Seward could carry that State; that the Democrats and "Americans" could not amalgamate again. Nevertheless, Mr. Teesdale declares that "it will not surprise us to learn that Mr. Seward, when he returns home [from Europe] refuses to allow his name to be used, if there is a shadow of doubt as to his acceptability to the Republicans of any of the states whose votes are needed to insure success. He will never seek or accept a nomination that is not equivalent to an election, while there is another soldier in the field who can insure success to the cause. At least such is our estimate of the lofty patriotism of the man." He recurs to his observations while on his late visit east [in March] of conditions in Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois. Chase was strong in Ohio and popular with the Republicans of the country at large; but the stout opposition of Corwin's friends to his advancement and the numerous adherents of Judge McLean and Senator Wade, who desired first their champion's nomination, made an effective effort on behalf of Chase improbable. Michigan was almost unanimous in support of Mr. Seward. Illinois "is for Lincoln; with a side current for Trumbull. . . . Their gallant labors for the redemption of their

State will give them much prominence in the national convention. Lincoln possesses most fully the elements of personal popularity. His genial traits bind his friends to him as by "hooks of steel."<sup>1</sup>

(e) Mention of Candidates Increases in December.

During December Iowa's editors deal more with particular candidates and somewhat with the general tactics of procedure, indicating a realization that the time for practical measures and definite decisions was approaching.

Summarizing the views of Judge Bates as lately given out at St. Louis, Mr. John Mahin, of Muscatine, notwithstanding the former's advocacy of due enforcement of the Fugitive Slave law and of non-interference with Slavery in the states wherein established, coupled with his declared opposition to its extension and abhorrence of the institution, concluded his editorial review with the assertion: "Upon this platform Mr. Bates would doubtless receive the united support of the Republican party."<sup>2</sup> As Mr. Mahin was a radical of radicals upon the subject of Slavery, living in a community that has always been noted in the State's history for its militant radicalism in social reforms his declaration is decidedly interesting and instructive.

Mr. Dunham's columns contain no editorial assertions of consequence. He received a personal letter from "a reliable Republican" in whose "good sense and sound judgment" he had much confidence, the substance of which he gives his readers. His correspondent urged him to advocate the renomination of Fremont and Dayton as in 1856, believing their popular strength equal to that of Seward and Chase and that "nothing is gained by courting the Old Whig votes and there is no use in trying to nominate a candidate to suit them." The letter elicits no comment from Mr. Dunham; he simply presents the suggestion to his readers "for their consideration."<sup>3</sup>

About this time the editor of *The Knoxville Journal*, observing that various state papers were urging the nomination of Senator Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania, remarked: "... we

<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Nov. 30, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Muscatine Journal*, Dec. 3, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Dec. 3, 1859.

are glad to see, none of them [do so] with a spirit of dogmatism or injustice towards other great men in the Republican party"; and he concludes—"With Cameron and Bates on our ticket Iowa is good for ten thousand majority."<sup>1</sup> Some correspondents of *The Commercial Advertiser* of Buffalo (N. Y.), attempting to promote the candidacy of Judge Bates by disparagement of Senator Seward, Mr. Teesdale declared their course "Not the Right Way." "It is the very worst policy to attempt to elevate one distinguished Republican by the depression of another."<sup>2</sup> The increasing attention given the position of the Missourian caused Mr. Add. H. Sanders of Davenport, to examine his "more important declarations of opinion"; and he announced: "But we have no hesitation in saying that in the main we approve them, as every Republican may—but we are very far from declaring that he is our first choice as the next Republican candidate for the Presidency. Most certainly, however, we should rather be *successful* with Mr. B. than *defeated* with any other man in the Union as our candidate."<sup>3</sup>

Down in Mills county in southwestern Iowa, *The Pacific Herald* declared itself an advocate of the nomination of Gov. Chase in preference to Senator Seward, on the ground that the latter would be opposed with "more intense bitterness" in the election. Mr. Teesdale took exception, declaring that of the two statesmen Chase was "a much more ultra-anti-slavery man than Seward. The history of both gentlemen will be thoroughly canvassed before nomination; and whoever receives the nomination must pass through a fiery ordeal."<sup>4</sup> Mr. Teesdale did not fear the result in either case and would heartily support the nominees.

December and the year closed with several interesting and pithy editorial expressions upon the presidential succession. They emphasize again the general unity of purpose, the absence of obdurate personal prejudice and willingness to cast aside personal wishes and old-time friendships if thereby success of the national cause could be insured and the common

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in *The Muscatine Daily Journal*, Dec. 9, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Dec. 7, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*The Davenport Weekly Gazette*, Dec. 8, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Dec. 21, 1859.

recognition of the primary strategic points in the situation. Two of them indicate how seriously the candidacy of Simon Cameron was regarded by shrewd observers.

Observing the frequent favorable mention of Simon Cameron's candidacy in his exchanges, Mr. Robert Holmes of Marion, editor of *The Linn County Register*, decided that the chances of the Pennsylvanian being nominated were so favorable as to be conclusive of the party's action. "Although we have had," he says, "some doubts as to the propriety of thus early taking sides for this or that man, inasmuch as it may engender strife and bad feeling amongst the friends of different gentlemen who will undoubtedly be presented to the convention—still without indicating any particular choice ourselves, we think the suggestion a good one. It is understood that without doubt, Pennsylvania will cast her vote for Mr. Cameron, and with Lincoln of Illinois for Vice-President, success would seem to be almost a certainty. For anything we can see now, these nominations are as likely to be made as any others spoken of."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Howell reprinting an article commendatory of Pennsylvania's candidate, again, as in June preceding, points out the strong position Mr. Cameron occupied as a candidate. "It is conceded that Pennsylvania and Illinois will form the battle-ground of the next campaign, and Pennsylvania has 27 votes, her change from one side to the other making a difference of 54. The location, the remarkable energy, and the home influence of Mr. Cameron greatly favor him."<sup>2</sup> Here as before the editor of *The Gate City* gives no hint of personal preference or of his probable positive action so far as it may be able to affect the practical decision.

This impersonal, almost indifferent, non-partisan consideration of candidates that is persistent in the columns of Mr. Howell's paper, likewise characterizing the course of Messrs. Dunham of Burlington and Teesdale of Des Moines, is effectively illustrated in an utterance of Mr. Sanders of Davenport. Canvassing the presidential question at the close of the year and noting the men mentioned as candidates he concludes: "When all are good and well-qualified men, he should

<sup>1</sup>*The Linn County Register*, Dec. 24, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, Dec. 28, 1859.



receive the nomination, who possesses the greatest attributes of strength—who is most likely to make the best race—and feelings and personal friendships should be laid aside by delegates as far as possible, to secure this object.” This is not the language of sentiment but of politics. The victory of the party and the triumph of the principles for which the party was established and continues to exist is the grand objective in view, not the attainment of personal prejudices.”<sup>1</sup>

If one fact more than another strikes the reader of the editorial columns of the Republican newspapers of Iowa in 1859, it is the conspicuous absence of keen personal partisan interest on the part of editors in furtherance of the candidacy of any one candidate. A few editors indicate their personal preferences and declare themselves for their favorite. But the majority are silent on the whole matter. This is especially true of the press of the small cities. The editors of the influential dailies in the large cities, while they frequently mention the presidential succession, noting the developments in other states and the changing fortunes of the different candidates,—declare themselves only on party principles and policy and procedure, but maintain an obstinate silence as to personal preferences. There is no ardent, tempestuous advocacy of either measures or men. There is no spirit of “rule or ruin” discoverable, although there is from time to time pronounced and emphatic declarations of what the editors regard as the essentials of success. Was this attitude exceptional? peculiar to the press of Iowa? The following taken from Mr. Howell’s columns is instructive:

We have not yet seen, in any one of the most prominent journals of the Republican party, excepting the (N. Y.) *Courier and Enquirer*, a decided preference as to a presidential candidate. *The Albany Journal*, [Thurlow Weed’s paper], *The Evening Post* and *The Tribune* at New York, the *Cincinnati Gazette*, the *Chicago Tribune*, and papers of that class, are utterly silent as to men. Even where the strongest partialities might be supposed to exist, the one firm resolution prevails, to keep men out of sight as far as possible and to forego all personal preferences for the sake of the cause. It is an encouraging sign,—a sign of solid and invincible union.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Davenport Weekly Gazette*, Dec. 29, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, Dec. 7, 1859.

In the matter of party opinion and public expression of desire, developments in Iowa in 1859 in the Republican preliminaries of the national campaign of 1860, fully typify the course of things in the nation at large.

(f) Public Consideration of Mr. Lincoln for the Presidency.

Politicians rarely put forward and support men or measures that shock the sensibilities or clash with the dominant desires of the majority of their constituents: and they never deliberately do violence to public expectation. They may misconceive and run athwart the major public interest or nominate men obnoxious to the *elite* in pious and polite circles, and, if parties are evenly balanced, suffer defeat in consequence. It is the primary and particular business of politicians to control, or seek to control, the arms and agencies of the government and determine the distribution of its benefits. Success is the paramount object of their activity and their success is the issue of public favor. It is a violent presumption to assume, as lay philosophers in pulpit and press are wont to do, that politicians impudently or negligently run amuck with public sentiment. Their decisions as to measures or as to candidates are made in the belief and in the hope that they coincide with and further the common desire, first of their partisan associates and second of the majority of the electors. Novel measures and never-before-heard-of candidates usually are no more tolerated than bad measures and corrupt nominees. Both measures and men, if politicians wish to secure the support of the public, must be familiar to the minds of electors. But electors, it is well to remember, do not include the entire mass of the population. The field of the practical politician is confined to those who directly determine the operation of the government in the formulation of its policies, in the conduct of its administration and in the operation of the party machinery whereby the public will is organized and made effective; and a large proportion of the male population devote but little or no attention to practical politics and hence exert no influence.

Was Abraham Lincoln at the close of 1859 a familiar in the minds of Iowa's politicians and electors? Was he a

factor with which the public reckoned as a matter of course? Had his name and fame become a part of the popular consciousness to the extent that he was mentioned among the presidential candidates worthy of definite consideration at the national convention? And did Iowans have reason to think that Mr. Lincoln was likewise considered by the party leaders and electors of the older eastern States? The files of Iowa's newspapers and the correspondence of some of the Republican party leaders afford us some evidence for an affirmative answer.

In the latter months of 1858 there was some mention of Mr. Lincoln as a presidential possibility: the mention resulting, of course, from the fame he had achieved in his debates with Senator Douglas. Mr. Teesdale declared that the Illinoian had "linked himself to the fortunes of the Republicans by hooks of steel. The name of Lincoln will be a household word for years to come. He has a brilliant future."<sup>1</sup> A week later *The Marshall County Times* felicitating the Republicans of Illinois on their popular victory urged them to prepare for the battle in 1860 for they might "see their gallant Old Abe" as the "presiding officer" of the Senate.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Zieback of Sioux City commenting on Greeley's suggestion for doing away with national conventions, mentions Mr. Lincoln as the candidate for whom Illinois would vote under his proposed plan.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Swigget of the same city cited the suggestion of the Chicago *Democrat*, Wentworth's paper, of his consideration for "President or Vice-President."<sup>4</sup> We have seen that the enthusiastic praise of Mr. Lincoln of the Rochester (N. Y.) *Democrat* closing with the words: "The Republicans of the Union will rejoice to do honor to the distinguished debater of Illinois" was quoted in various papers in the State.<sup>5</sup>

During 1859 public interest in Mr. Lincoln was manifested almost continuously throughout the year and in sundry ways. His stories and quips were cited; generous extracts from his

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<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Nov. 17, 1858.

<sup>2</sup>*The Marshall County Times*, Nov. 24, 1858.

<sup>3</sup>*The Register*, Dec. 2, 1858.

<sup>4</sup>*The Eagle*, Nov. 27, 1858.

<sup>5</sup>*The Gate City*, Nov. 22, 1858, and *The Muscatine Daily Journal*, Nov. 23, 1858.

political speeches were quoted; his journeyings about the country were noted; his name was linked with those of the foremost leaders of his party; his views were referred to by friends and critics alike as authoritative utterances of the principles of his party; and he was the beneficiary of frequent mention as a statesman worthy of nomination for one or the other of the two highest offices within the gift of the people. And the significance of such manifestations of public interest is materially enhanced when we consider the conditions under which newspapers were then conducted.

A local correspondent of *The Gate City* signing himself "Free Labor," refers (Jan. 14) to Senator Douglas' course "towards two prominent statesmen of the Republican party. I speak of Mr. Seward and Mr. Lincoln." On May 30 Mr. Howell prints Mr. Lincoln's letter to Dr. Canisius relative to the Massachusetts Two Year Amendment affecting naturalized citizens. When Mr. Lincoln was in Ohio the same paper contains (Sept. 23) a column and more of "Abe Lincoln's speech at Cincinnati the other night"; and a week later cites the praise of the same speech in *The National Intelligencer*. It reprints (Oct. 4) a portion of the speech at Columbus anent Douglas and the Dred Scott decision.

Repelling the attacks of the Democrats upon the Republican expressions regarding the essential conflict between Free and Slave labor, Mr. Howell says (Nov. 23) that the "irrepressible conflict" the announcement of which in "lucid terms by both Lincoln and Seward" so shocked the Democrats was first pointed out by Calhoun and by *The Richmond Enquirer*, and after quoting the latter he concludes: "Did ever Seward or Lincoln or Thomas Jefferson state the case more definitely or imperatively? . . ." The notations and expressions of Mr. Howell fairly represent other Republican editors in the State who kept their weather eyes on the forces and factors in the forthcoming national contest. Mr. Drummond of *The Eagle* of Vinton, as we have seen, declared, May 10: "The Republican party adopts what the *New York Herald* terms 'the bloody, brutal manifesto' of Abraham Lincoln, as re-echoed by Senator Seward" . . . and Mr. Dorr at

Dubuque couples the names of the two statesmen in the same connection.<sup>1</sup>

The mention of Mr. Lincoln as an available candidate for either the first or second place on the national ticket began comparatively early. Mr. Mahin reprints (March 29) an editorial from the Chicago *Democrat* urging him for the Vice-Presidency.<sup>2</sup> Some two months later *The Montezuma Weekly Republican* reprints an editorial of *The Rockford* (Ill.) *Republican* also advocating his selection for second place. On July 28 the same paper reproduces the suggestion of *The Free Press* of Elwood, Kansas, of Gov. Seward for President and Mr. Lincoln for Vice-President.

Some commentators on the first nomination of Abraham Lincoln have pointed out that in some of the lists of candidates published when the pre-convention campaign was culminating, Mr. Lincoln's name was not included: and hence the conclusion that his nomination was most extraordinary and surprising to the country at large. Thus in Forney's *Philadelphia Press* in a list published in November, 1859, and reproduced (Nov. 29) in *The Davenport Daily Gazette*, the Illinoisian's name was omitted: and a book published at Philadelphia in 1860 entitled *Our Living Representative Men* mentions a score or so of candidates in the two great parties but does not refer to Mr. Lincoln. De Bow's *Review* reviewing the volume immediately following the convention at Chicago says the omission was "creditable" to the author, Mr. John Savage, as the "claims of this personage were regarded to be too contemptible to entitle him to a place in the 'Gallery'."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Teesdale in April and Mr. Sanders in December in editorials dealing with candidates mention Seward, Chase, Bates, Bell, Crittenden, Cameron, Fremont, McLean, Scott, Hale, Grow—but fail to refer to Mr. Lincoln.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless Mr. Lincoln was mentioned for the first place and politicians in Iowa had him more or less in mind constantly as a not-improbable nominee.

<sup>1</sup>*The Dubuque Herald*, Oct. 23, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, March 29, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>De Bow's *Review*, Vol. XXIX, pp. 100-101 (July, 1860).

<sup>4</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, April 13, 1859: and *The Davenport Weekly Gazette*, Dec. 29, 1859.



Mr. Teesdale in August and again in November refers specifically to the public consideration of Mr. Lincoln as a candidate for the first place and expresses his willingness to abide by the nomination if made after a full consideration of the best interests of the party and the cause the Republicans desire to promote. Moreover in a list of candidates published by the Democratic paper at Des Moines, Mr. Will Porter, the editor, includes Mr. Lincoln.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the most interesting evidence of the national consideration of the Illinoian was afforded Iowans in the columns of Greeley's *Tribune*. In his issue of September 27 he quotes what purports to be an extract from a speech of Congressman Robert Schenck of Ohio, regarding the Presidency. Commenting upon Lincoln's "masterly political exposition made in this city [Cincinnati?] to-day by Abraham Lincoln," he says "that there is a candidate for you, whose perceptions are clear, whose moral tendencies are correct, and whose constitutional habit of action is so happily conservative, that he is high above all temptations to extremes in any direction."<sup>2</sup> Greeley, himself, two weeks and a half later (Oct. 14) in an elaborate editorial outlining and defending "*The Tribune's* policy" mentions Lincoln among other candidates who had "friends who will in due time present their names in connection with the Presidency. . . ." Finally the readers of Mr. Howell were impressed with the widespread and positive consideration of Mr. Lincoln by the country at large by an editorial note in *The Gate City* (Dec. 13) which after noting that three Iowa papers had come out for Cameron, said: "We observe in Pennsylvania one prominent paper proposes Cameron for President and Lincoln for Vice-President while the Reading (Pa.) *Journal*, a paper of standing and influence, intimates its preference of Lincoln for President."

<sup>1</sup>*Iowa State Journal*, Nov. 19, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.), Sept. 27, 1859. The citation from *The Tribune* is somewhat obscure. It purports to be from a speech of Mr. Schenck's at Dayton. But his reference to Mr. Lincoln's speech in "this city" would seem to imply either Columbus or Cincinnati,—as all chronicles concur in referring only to Mr. L.'s speeches in those two cities. As the item in *The Tribune* above the extract taken is accredited to *The Cincinnati Commercial* we may surmise that Mr. S. was interviewed at Cincinnati, or made a speech there, immediately following Mr. Lincoln's speech.

## (g) Summary of Party Opinion in 1859.

The reader will have noticed several facts in the preceding exposition of party opinion among Republicans in Iowa in 1859, which it may be well to summarize before proceeding to deal with the personal efforts of or for candidates and the party maneuvers.

First and foremost, the paramount consideration as to which all elements of the Opposition to the party in power agreed, was Slavery and its treatment by the national government. Other matters might be important, but they were subsidiary in public interest. All elements of the Opposition with the exception of radical abolitionists resisted the extension of Slavery into territories where it was not found prior to 1850 and disapproved of interference with it in states where established.

While there was unanimity of opinion in the large, there was confusion in respect to the practical enforcement of the legal rights of slave-owners in the free states and in the settlement of new territories, and this fact made the working union of Old Line Whigs and abolitionists difficult. The persistence of "Americanism," a sort of decadent Know-Nothingism, greatly increased the factional antagonisms of the sundry elements already hostile and contentious on the subject of Slavery.

The election of 1856 had been lost by the Republicans because of the inability of the mutually repellant groups of the Opposition to coalesce. Such a working union was imperative if the party was to win in the contest in 1860.

A coalition was impracticable unless there was mutual give-and-take; harmony as to essentials and points of general agreement and non-emphasis of and non-reference to particular contentions that irritated and distracted factions or groups essential to the party's alignment.

Principles and policies all agreed, should be paramount over the personal ambitions of candidates, or the sectional and personal preferences for favorite candidates.

The doubtful states wherein success was essential to national victory should be the primary consideration in selecting the

candidate. But it was not enough that a candidate should be satisfactory to this or that doubtful state: he must enjoy the fullest confidence of the rank and file in the solid Republican states as well, as regards his ability, character and conduct in the vital issues. Indifference to the subject of Slavery, tergiversation as to views or course of action would not be sanctioned.

No commercial considerations hostile to the broadest treatment of the issues, no personal intrigues, no tricks, no factional or partisan maneuvers inconsistent with frank and fair consideration of the characters and availability of candidates would be tolerated.

Iowa had no candidate of her own to advance, and her editors and party leaders had no favorite whose nomination was urged with any vigor. Few personal preferences were indicated. The spirit of rule or ruin was completely absent.

In general there was a noteworthy harmony among the Republicans of Iowa in 1859 regarding the principles and procedure that should be observed in preparing for the great national contest of 1860. They were generally of one mind as to the paramount issues. Success with a sane and sensible program was to them vastly preferable to defeat with a platform of idealities compounded by dreamers and radicals. Some party men had candidates whom they favored and urged, but for the most part editors and leaders were reticent. Victory was the goal they sought, not the exaltation of a favorite at the risk of success.

#### *5—Efforts of Candidates or their Promoters in Iowa.*

The amount and kind of personal effort put forth by the candidates for the Republican presidential nomination in 1860, or by their promoters, directly to secure the favor and support of Iowa's press and party leaders cannot now be realized. There was more or less personal activity, although the evidence is rather meager as regards some of the candidates.

The State was then teeming with thousands of pioneers but recently removed from the older states to the east and south

wherein the candidates lived. Many of those pioneers had been forceful factors in the politics of their former homes. For example, Gov. Samuel J. Kirkwood and the late Senator William B. Allison had both made their mark in Ohio before emigrating to Iowa.<sup>1</sup> Naturally, the candidates or their promoters would correspond with their emigrant friends in Iowa seeking information as to their attitude, or that of the party leaders of the State towards their candidacy; and no less would the pioneers, if local ambitions or interests did not conflict, incline to urge the consideration of their favorite champion of their native state, or state of previous residence. Mentioning merely those states whose emigrant citizens resident in Iowa in 1860 exceeded 10,000 in the census enumeration:—Ohio led with 99,240; Indiana followed with 57,555; Pennsylvania with 52,156; New York with 46,053; Illinois with 26,696; Virginia with 17,944; and Kentucky with 13,204. The natives of New England all told in Iowa numbered only 25,040; while the natives of the Southern or slave States amounted to 54,006. The Middle States were credited with 103,173 and the states of the old Northwest territory with 193,005. Being but recently removed from their old homes their memories and the ties of their relations with associates in their ancestral seats were vigorous. As the arrangements for the national Republican convention began to materialize we must presume that many a letter crossed, inquiring about or urging this or that candidate, discussing his availability, and the chances of his nomination and election. But little evidence is discoverable of such correspondence in 1859, either in the way of letters extant or of rescripts thereof. The residence of many of the influential editors of the State prior to

<sup>1</sup>*John Sherman's Recollections*, pp. 46, 76.

Gov. Kirkwood had attained local eminence between 1845 and 1849 as prosecuting attorney of Richland county and as a member of the Constitutional Convention of Ohio. He was a Democrat in politics but on the repeal of the Missouri Compromise he revolted. At a mass meeting at Mansfield, Feb. 17, 1854, he introduced and urged the passage of a strong resolution deploring the agitation of the slavery question and repudiating the repeal of the Compromise. He was a prominent candidate for Congress in 1855—the year in which he emigrated to Iowa.

Mr. Allison began his public career as an attorney at Ashland, in Wayne county adjoining Richland. He was a candidate for clerk of the county court. He was made secretary of the first Republican state convention organized in Ohio in 1855. His first party service of note in Iowa was attendance as a delegate at the Republican state convention in 1859 and working for Kirkwood's nomination for governor.



coming to Iowa enforces this presumption and their columns afford us some evidence that there was intercommunication between them and the candidates or their promoters.<sup>1</sup>

(a) Judge McLean Visits the Northwest.

When visiting old acquaintances in Ohio in March, Mr. Teesdale designed to visit Judge McLean at his old home in Cincinnati. Writing to his readers in Iowa Mr. Teesdale reports: "He is, I am told, in excellent health and spirits. Who knows

<sup>1</sup>The states of nativity, or of previous residence, and the editorial careers of the editors whose expressions have been chiefly cited are suggestive.

Mr. A. B. F. Hildreth of *The St. Charles Intelligencer* was a Vermonter. In 1839 he founded *The Literary Souvenir* at Lowell, Mass., and also conducted *The Morning News* (daily) of that city. In 1842 he went to Bradford, Vt., where he published *The Green Mountain Gem* and *The American Protector* (an advocate of high tariffs). From 1844 to 1852, in lieu of the latter, he published *The Family Gazette*; and from 1853 to 1855 he published *The Mirror*, of Holyoke, Mass. He came to St. Charles, Iowa, in 1856.

Mr. Charles Aldrich of *The Hamilton Freeman* of Webster City, was a native of New York. In 1850 he established *The Cattaraugus Sachem* at Randolph. From 1851 to 1856 he edited and published *The Olean Journal*. When but 19 years of age he was made secretary of the first Free Soil convention held in Cattaraugus county. He came to Iowa in 1857.

Mr. Frank W. Palmer of *The Times*, of Dubuque, although born in Indiana was virtually a New Yorker, spending his childhood and youth at Jamestown. From 1848 to 1858 he published *The Jamestown Journal*. In 1853 he was elected to the New York legislature, serving two terms. He came to Dubuque, Iowa, in 1858.

Mr. Jacob Rich of *The Guardian* of Quasqueton, and later of Independence, was a native of New York City. He was educated at Philadelphia. He came to Iowa in 1856.

Mr. John Edwards of *The Patriot* of Chariton, was born in Kentucky. Anti-slavery convictions sent him to Indiana, where he served in the state legislature between 1848 and 1852. He came to Iowa in 1853.

Mr. William W. Junkin of *The Ledger* of Fairfield, was a native of Virginia. He learned the printer's craft in the offices of *The Argus* of Wheeling. He came to Iowa in 1843.

Mr. Thomas Drummond of *The Eagle* of Vinton, was born in Virginia, was educated at Lexington, entered journalism, moved to Ohio after 1850 and came to Iowa in 1855. He bought *The Eagle* in 1857.

Mr. Clark Dunham of *The Hawk-Eye* of Burlington was a Vermonter by birth, but spent his childhood in Licking county, Ohio. From 1840 to 1854 he edited *The Gazette* of Newark, Ohio, moving to Iowa in the latter year.

Mr. James B. Howell of *The Gate City* of Keokuk, although a native of New Jersey, spent his youth in Ohio from 1819 to 1841, when he removed to Iowa. The business manager of *The Gate City* from 1854 to 1860 was Mr. Wm. Richards, a native of Ohio, who moved to Iowa in 1854.

Mr. Addison H. Sanders of *The Gazette* of Davenport, was a native of Cincinnati, Ohio, where he learned the printer's trade. He came to Iowa in 1856.

Mr. John Mahin of *The Journal* of Muscatine, was a native of Indiana, but early came to Iowa, learning the printer's trade in the office of the Bloomington (now Muscatine) *Herald*, later called the *Journal*.

Mr. John Teesdale of *The Iowa Weekly Citizen* of Des Moines, was born in York, England, but came with his parents to Philadelphia in 1818. There he learned printing. He went to Wheeling, Virginia, where between 1830 and 1836 he was editor of *The Gazette* and later of *The Times*. From 1836 to 1843 he edited *The Ohio Standard*; and from 1843 to 1848 he edited *The Ohio State Journal* of Columbus, and between 1848 and 1856 *The Beacon* of Akron. Meantime (1844-46) he had been private secretary to Gov. Mordecai Bartley. Mr. Teesdale's associate editor, Mr. J. M. Dixon, a son of a Virginia Methodist circuit riding preacher, was also a native of Ohio.



but he may yet be called to a higher field in the service of his country. Upon no man in public life could a more cordial union be effected for the next presidency, than upon Judge McLean, if his age is not deemed objectionable. Mr. Chase is much spoken of in the same connection by the people of Ohio. . . ."<sup>1</sup> In the last week of September *The Times* of Dubuque announced: "Judge McLean, of the supreme court, came down the river last evening, and is spending the day at the Julien House. He is in fine health. At noon about twenty members of the bar called upon him. . . . The interview was very pleasant. Judge McLean is vigorous both in body and in mind, and very easy and agreeable in conversation. . . . The Judge has relatives in Minnesota, and has been paying them a visit."<sup>2</sup>

Business interests and relatives are of course appropriate objects of exclusive private concern; but when a man who is constantly mentioned as a desirable candidate and a not improbable nominee for a high political office, makes an extended journey through a region of primary strategic importance, alert politicians are wont to note the fact as in the nature of a reconnaissance. Judge McLean's visit was noticed by some of the editors and his health and agreeable manners referred to.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Teesdale remarked: "We rejoice that he received fitting attention at Dubuque. He is one of the purest and best men of the country. We have experienced his hospitality and witnessed his unostentatious kindness in days gone by, when visiting Cincinnati and residing at the capital of Ohio. A recent letter from the Judge [to Mr. T.] written at Lake Pepin, with all the freedom of private intercourse, attests the vigor of his intellect and the activity of his life."<sup>3</sup> The reiteration respecting the jurist's health and the vigor of his life and mental powers suggests the politician's solicitude that the doubts of critics or dubious friends were not only ill-founded but that rumors to the contrary were, or very likely were, promoted with injurious intent.

No evidence of personal solicitation on behalf of Judge McLean's candidacy has come under the writer's notice. He

<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, April 13, 1859: Correspondence dated Akron, Ohio, March 26.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.*, September 28, 1859: *The Dubuque Times* cited. <sup>3</sup>*Ib.*

had some active admirers, however. In the latter part of December, pursuant to the call of the state convention to select delegates to the Chicago convention, friends or party leaders in the farthestmost southwestern corner of the State, in Fremont county, were either so numerous or so alert, forehanded and effective as to secure the passage by the county convention that selected the county delegates to the state convention, of a resolution declaring that "Hon. John McLean of Ohio is our first choice for President,"<sup>1</sup> thereby virtually instructing their delegates to the state convention to use their influence to secure his nomination.

(b) Friends of Chase and Cameron Active.

Salmon P. Chase, as biographers and associates have since shown, was not indisposed to promote his chances of securing the nomination by personal communication. He had many staunch admirers and friends in Iowa. Governor Grimes had, in former years carried on a cordial and intimate correspondence with him, esteeming highly his ability, character and public career. Governor-elect Kirkwood, because of old-time party affiliations in Ohio, entertained the friendliest of feelings for him. Both of those distinguished Iowans, could they have realized their primary preferences, would have thrown their influence at Chicago in 1860 in favor of Chase's nomination.<sup>2</sup> The late Senator Wm. B. Allison, because of former associations in Ohio, advocated Chase's nomination and cast his first vote for him the next year at the national convention.<sup>3</sup> The business manager of *The Gate City*, Mr. Wm. Richards, was an Ohioan who some years previously had enjoyed some degree of intimacy with Gov. Chase. He desired the success of the latter's candidacy. From a letter written subsequent to the state convention (Jan. 18, 1860) it would appear that he acted as an outflanker and vidette for him, reporting conditions and prospects in Iowa.<sup>4</sup> The only instance of instruc-

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.*, Jan. 18, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>Salter's *Life of Grimes passim*; and letters (MSS.) to the writer from Dr. Salter, Mr. W. W. Baldwin both of Burlington, and Hon. Peter A. Dey of Iowa City.

<sup>3</sup>Letters (MSS.) of Sen. Wm. B. Allison to the writer, Dec. 13, 1906, and May 3, 1907.

<sup>4</sup>Wm. Richards to Salmon P. Chase (MSS.), *Gate City Office*, February 24, 1860, in Chase papers in Library of Congress.

tions for a presidential candidate in the local caucuses or primaries, so far as the writer can discover, resulted in Chase's favor. Two Ohioans, the brothers, F. T. and A. K. Campbell, editors and publishers of *The Journal* of Newton, the county seat of Jasper county, took the lead in securing instructions in the party caucus that selected the delegates to the county convention, being prompted thereto by admiration of Gov. Chase's career in their native state.<sup>1</sup> In December *The Herald* of Pacific City declared specifically in favor of Chase's nomination.<sup>2</sup>

Pennsylvanians were numerous in Iowa; and the universally conceded strategic importance of Pennsylvania in the national contest would ordinarily induce energetic efforts on the part of the candidate or of his promoters to secure the support of the party leaders and delegates. There are some signs that there was more or less activity. We have already seen that there was a marked increase of consideration of the candidacy of Simon Cameron in December and one suspects systematic work in its furtherance. We find Mr. Teesdale expressing his thanks to Mr. Cameron for a copy of an "able speech" delivered by the latter in the Senate.<sup>3</sup> In Illinois Cameron Clubs were forming in November and Mr. Teesdale refers to them in terms whence we might infer that similar organizations were in contemplation or under way in Iowa.<sup>4</sup> Three strong papers in southern Iowa, *The News* of Mt. Pleasant, *The Journal* of Knoxville and *The Patriot* of Chariton, and one in northeast Iowa, *The Linn County Register* of Marion, announced themselves as favorable to his nomination.<sup>5</sup> Referring to this coincidence, Mr. Hildreth intimated his suspicion that Mr. Cameron or his agents were busy in the State "fixing the flints" to secure the Pennsylvanian's nomination: hence the concurrent expressions of the papers mentioned.<sup>6</sup> The correspondence of Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke, chairman of Iowa's delegation at Chicago, subsequent to the convention, seems to indicate that there had been correspondence between him and

<sup>1</sup>*The Gate City*, Jan. 11, 1860: and interview with Mr. A. K. Campbell, Des Moines, Iowa, March 17, 1908.

<sup>2</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Dec. 21, 1859. <sup>3</sup>*Ib.*, Dec. 7, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>*Ib.*, Nov. 23, 1859. <sup>5</sup>*The Gate City*, Dec. 13, 1859.

<sup>6</sup>*The St. Charles Intelligencer*, Jan. 12, 1860.

Cameron's chief lieutenants during the preliminaries; but when it occurred is not now determinable.<sup>1</sup>

(c) Edward Bates and the Sources of His Strength.

The personal activity of Edward Bates of St. Louis, or that of his friends in furtherance of his candidacy is to be inferred from the general situation. Prior to 1860 St. Louis was to Iowa what, since, Chicago has become, the great entrepot of her interstate commerce. Iowa's farmers and shippers sent their produce and stock to her markets and chiefly from the jobbing houses of that city, Iowa's merchants obtained their stocks of drugs, dry-goods, groceries and hardwares.<sup>2</sup> The river traffic of the Upper Mississippi and Missouri was predominantly an outgo from and return to the docks of St. Louis. In the nature of the case the affiliations of business and professional men, particularly in the eastern cities of Iowa along the Mississippi, with the leaders in business and professional pursuits in that city must have been close and constant. In that commercial metropolis Judge Bates was a conspicuous citizen. One of the popular boats plying between St. Louis and Keokuk in the forepart of the decade was the "Edward Bates."<sup>3</sup> So pronounced was the admiration of some Iowans that children were named after him.<sup>4</sup> Before the bar and on the bench, in the constitutional convention and in the legislature of Missouri and in Congress his reputation had gained steadily in praiseworthy prominence. In 1847 as president of the Convention for Internal Improvements at Chicago he "made a favorable impression upon the country at large."<sup>5</sup> His declination of a cabinet portfolio tendered him by President Fillmore in 1850, signalized his national reputation and influence. In 1854 Greeley's readers in Iowa learned that his powers as a public speaker impressed strongly the most critical

<sup>1</sup>Correspondence of Wm. Penn. Clarke (MSS.) in Aldrich Collection, Historical Department of Iowa, at Des Moines.

<sup>2</sup>Langworthy, *Dubuque, Its History, etc., passim* and Burrows, *Fifty Years in Iowa (1838-1888) passim*.

<sup>3</sup>*The Weekly Dispatch*, June 8, 1848.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. Edwin Manning of Keosauqua, one of the most prominent and wealthiest business men among the pioneers of Iowa, was an enthusiastic admirer of Judge Bates. He gave one of his sons the Judge's surname for a given name. He also distributed subscriptions to Greeley's weekly *Tribune* gratuitously among his friends at the time Greeley was urging Judge Bates for the presidency. Interview with the late Geo. C. Duffield of Keosauqua and Hon. C. C. Nourse of Des Moines.

<sup>5</sup>Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, V. 1, p. 193.



of eastern observers.<sup>1</sup> We have seen that the announcement of his candidacy was received by the Republican editors of Iowa with but little adverse criticism and generally with considerable favor, increasing very decidedly towards the end of the year. Interviews with him, his letters and speeches indicating his views on the vital issues of the day, were generously reproduced in their columns.

The most prominent advocate of Judge Bates' nomination—probably the prime mover on his behalf—was Mr. John A. Kasson of Des Moines, then chairman of the Republican state central committee. His course illustrates very strikingly the immediate influence of environment and personal associations on men's political conduct. Mr. Kasson was born and educated in Vermont and entered the legal profession in Massachusetts. His ability and activity may be inferred from the fact that in 1848 he was sent as a delegate from Massachusetts to the national Free Soil convention at Buffalo along with Charles Francis Adams, Sr. In 1851 he came west, settling at St. Louis. He very soon entered into a law partnership with Mr. B. Gratz Brown, a notable citizen of Missouri and editor of the St. Louis *Democrat*. Mr. Brown was foremost in promoting the candidacy of Judge Bates and was chairman of

<sup>1</sup>In view of the controversy as to the animus of Greeley's course in refusing to promote the candidacy of Seward and his final advocacy of the nomination of Judge Bates at Chicago, the following from what we may suspect was "editorial correspondence" (i. e. from the pen of either Charles A. Dana or Horace Greeley) is interesting. The occasion was an excursion into the Northwest, projected by the promoters of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad Company, consisting of notables from the east; among the number were ex-President Millard Fillmore, Geo. Bancroft, E. E. Hale, Professor Benj. Silliman, Thurlow Weed, Catherine Sedgwick and Count Adam Gurowski. At Galena a reception and banquet were given in honor of ex-President Fillmore and to one of the toasts Judge Bates was asked to respond. Of his response the correspondent of *The Tribune* says:

"That of Mr. Bates was listened to with particular interest by those of us who had not before enjoyed an opportunity of seeing this distinguished man. It was simple and without effort, spoken in a very quiet and straightforward manner, but with one or two touches that betrayed the orator. It is much to be regretted that Mr. Bates has never taken that leading part in our public affairs which he might have filled so honorably and advantageously to himself and the country."—*N. Y. Tribune* (w.), June 17, 1854: Correspondence dated at St. Paul, Minn., June 8th.

The dissolution of the firm of Greeley, Seward and Weed did not take place until 1856.

Judge Bates seems to have made very lasting impressions as an orator. Writing thirteen years after the Rivers and Harbors Convention at Chicago, in 1847, a brilliant correspondent of *The Springfield* (Mass.) *Republican*, writing from Burlington, Iowa, Feb. 4, 1860—and a hostile critic of Judge Bates as a candidate for the presidency—says of his effort on that occasion; he "carried away the whole audience in the two emotions of astonishment and delight by his retiring speech." Correspondence reprinted in the *Daily Hawk-Eye*, Feb. 16, 1860.



Missouri's delegation at Chicago. Mr. Kasson came to Des Moines in 1857 but the ties of his friendships and business affiliations with St. Louis continued and they in no small degree, caused him in the preliminaries to favor the nomination of his friend and professional associate in St. Louis at the national convention.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Joseph Eiboek of Garnavillo, as previously mentioned, advocated his nomination. Mr. Edwin Manning of Keosauqua, because of business and personal relations, also promoted it.<sup>2</sup> The Republicans of Fremont county, when they by resolution declared for Judge McLean for President, at the same time proclaimed Judge Bates to be their choice for Vice-President.<sup>3</sup> *The Journal of Knoxville* likewise urged him for Vice-President.<sup>4</sup>

(d) Seward and the Silence of His Friends.

Activity—either individual or concerted—on behalf of Senator Seward's nomination was conspicuous by its absence, at least so far as discoverable signs would indicate: and the reasons therefor are by no means clear. His friends and advocates were active and forehanded in Oregon in 1859, securing, in April, instructions to the delegates to the national convention to work for his nomination.<sup>5</sup> In 1860 systematic and successful efforts on his behalf were put forth in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Texas, Virginia, and Massachusetts to secure either instructions or delegations favorable to him. In Iowa, as elsewhere, he was a favorite champion with the majority of the aggressive anti-slavery elements. His eminence in national councils and his fame had been household words since the days of his governorship in New York. Plus all these, the political acumen, the extensive and facile connections, business and political, and the vast resources of his field worker and manager, Mr. Thurlow Weed, were noteworthy. Iowa was among the first, if indeed not the first, to call a special state convention to select delegates to the national convention. Nevertheless, the Republican press of

<sup>1</sup>Mr. John A. Kasson to the writer (MSS.) Aug. 28, 1906.

<sup>2</sup>See foot-note, *ante*.

<sup>3</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Jan. 18, 1860.

<sup>4</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, Dec. 9, 1859.

<sup>5</sup>*The Oregon Statesman*, April 26, 1859.

Iowa in 1859 was almost wholly silent. A solitary editor at DeWitt declared specifically for his nomination. Mr. Teesdale asserted his belief in April that the statesman of Auburn was the real choice of the Republicans of Iowa but he did not urge his nomination, and, on November 30th he even doubts whether the Senator from New York covets the nomination.

This reticence as regards Seward in 1859 is somewhat strange except on one hypothesis. Mr. Eiboeck, it will be recalled, stated categorically that Seward would "stand no chance with Bates, for reasons that are known to every one." Those reasons must have been that the senior Senator from New York was looked upon by the majority of the experienced party workers in Iowa as a radical of an extreme and dangerous sort, whose selection was unlikely because his nomination would endanger the success of the party at the polls. There is much to confirm this surmise. His doctrine of "Higher Law" and his expression "The Irrepressible Conflict" and sundry broad generalities accompanying it, while defensible on ultimate grounds of economics and ethics, seemed by implication to warrant lawlessness and direct attack upon the property rights of slaveholders. *The N. Y. Herald* referred to his "brutal and bloody" program. The Democratic press of Iowa dealt with him in like terms. *The Sentinel* of Ft. Dodge under the caption "Political Twins," reprints a slashing article from *The Chicago Herald* proclaiming the similarities of the views of Seward and Wendell Phillips, that Prince Rupert of Radicals. New York's Senator is "the father of Black Republicanism and the great leader of those unfortunate monomaniacs who expect to elect him President . . ." whose "mandate" was the "Higher Law" which ordained that "Slavery must be abolished." The views of this "teacher in the Israel of treason" were all of a piece with those of Phillips who had declared that the "merit" of the Republican party lay in the fact that it was a "sectional party. . . . It is the North arrayed against the South" and secession and separation are predicted by that silver-tongued seer with satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Following what Mr. Howell designated "The *emeute* at Harper's Ferry in

<sup>1</sup>*The Ft. Dodge Sentinel*, Nov. 26, 1859.

which a score of insane white men and idiotic negroes seized the United States Armory . . .”<sup>1</sup> Democratic denunciation of Seward as a fomenter of anarchy and an abettor of treason reached a point of fury not far from frenzy. Two events especially encouraged it. Very soon after the affair at Harper’s Ferry he was publicly charged with having had treasonable correspondence with John Brown or his backers. Again his name appeared among the endorsers of Helper’s *Impending Crisis* that produced such a terrific uproar and upset in the organization of the national House of Representatives in December, 1859; and the pith and point of that notorious book was “Slavery must be abolished.” Mr. Zieback of Sioux City reprints extensive portions of a scathing article in *The Louisville Journal* denouncing Seward’s criminal knowledge of Brown’s conspiracy, guarding “the villainous secret” as effectually as the “arch-conspirator” himself. His offense was black enough,—even if no more than “criminal lack of courage” to speak out and reveal the “atrocious scheme,”—to “redde[n] the cheeks of every citizen in the land.”<sup>2</sup> The vigor of the indictment of Seward was not lessened by the fact that *The Louisville Journal*, under the brilliant editorship of George D. Prentice, was one of the stoutest Opposition papers in the country. One finds no defense of Seward by the Republican press in Iowa against the ferocious attacks of the Democratic press. Their silence may have been utter contempt for them or it may have been due to a sub-conscious feeling that they could not make a very satisfactory defense. The marked change that took place in the sentiment of the leaders and the press of the State after Seward’s speech in the Senate February 27, 1860, affords rather strong evidence in confirmation of the explanation here suggested for the reticence of Iowans towards the candidacy of the Senator from New York in 1859.

(e) Abraham Lincoln’s Relations With Iowa and Iowans.

That Abraham Lincoln in 1859 was not unmindful of his chances for securing the Republican nomination for the Presi-

<sup>1</sup>*The Gate City*, Oct. 24, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Sioux City Register*, Dec. 10, 1859.

dency in 1860 his correspondence and biographers show. That he was not averse by proper methods to promoting them by pen or in person we know. There is considerable reason for thinking that he had his eye on Iowa and cultivated the favorable opinion of her people and her Republican party leaders. What is no less to the point Iowans and the chiefs of the Republican party in Iowa for many years sought the personal acquaintance and political influence of Abraham Lincoln.

As early as 1844 Mr. James W. Grimes, or some other party chief in Burlington, tried to secure Mr. Lincoln for a speech at a mass meeting of the Whigs in that city on July 13th of that year; and he seems to have promised to come.<sup>1</sup> In 1856 two other efforts were made to secure him for speeches in the political canvass: in June Governor Grimes,<sup>2</sup> and in late August or early September Mr. Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, writing him urging his acceptance of invitations made.<sup>3</sup> Again in 1857 Governor Grimes tried to secure him for a series of speeches.<sup>4</sup> For sundry reasons Mr. Lincoln was unable to comply with their wishes. But if any fact would indicate that before the celebrated senatorial contest of 1858 Mr. Lincoln was a political factor of interstate fame and far from an "Unknown"—the fact that Governor Grimes, the last man in the world to bother with nonentities, an inveterate searcher after accomplishment and efficiency, should thus for many years seek to enlist him in the Republican forces in Iowa demonstrates the extensive and solid reputation possessed by the Illinoian. In 1858, as we have seen, in the interval between the debate with Douglas at Galesburg and their meeting at Quincy, Mr. Lincoln followed Senator Douglas over the river to Burlington and on the evening of October 9th spoke in Grimes Hall on the chief issues in the pending contest.<sup>5</sup>

In 1857 Mr. Lincoln came in contact with some of the business projects of Iowa that gave him increased interest in the State, extending his relations and acquaintanceship with influential factors in such wise as to prove extremely advantageous

<sup>1</sup>James W. Grimes to David E. Blair reprinted in this issue of THE ANNALS.

<sup>2</sup>Salter's *Grimes*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>3</sup>*Lincoln's Works* (Miller Ed.), Vol. 9, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>Salter's, *Grimes*, p. 95.

<sup>5</sup>THE ANNALS OF IOWA (3d Series) Vol. VIII, pp. 453-455.

to him in the final clinch of the convention at Chicago. The Chicago and Rock Island Railroad Company in order to enhance the extensions of their line in Iowa spanned the Mississippi at Rock Island and Davenport. The construction of the company's bridge aroused the bitter animosities of the rivermen, partially because they instinctively opposed the advancement of a rival mode of transportation that threatened their supremacy, and partially because they seriously believed that the bridge would prove an obstruction to free transit on the river. Suspicious accidents, boats striking the piers and the burning of the bridge, indicated the intensity of the antagonism of interests. The owners of one damaged vessel brought suit in the federal court presided over by Judge James Love of Keokuk, who decided that the bridge was an irremediable obstruction to navigation. His ruling if confirmed was fatal to interstate commerce by railways where navigable rivers intervened. The matter was eventually taken up and tried in the Circuit Court at Chicago, Associate Justice John McLean, of the Federal Supreme Court presiding. The Rock Island company employed Mr. Lincoln among others. He chiefly examined the witnesses and made the main argument to the court. The decision was in favor of the company.<sup>1</sup>

One of the directors of the Rock Island company employing Mr. Lincoln in the Rock Island bridge case was Mr. Norman P. Judd, later chairman of the Republican state central committee of Illinois and also a member of the Republican national committee—and one of Mr. Lincoln's chief field workers at the Chicago convention. By the way of this association with Mr. Judd, Mr. Lincoln invested in lands in Iowa in and about Council Bluffs, the then proposed western terminus of the Rock Island, or the Mississippi and Missouri Railroad as it was then called, Lincoln buying some of Judd's holdings in Council Bluffs. Sometime previously he had become interested in real estate in Iowa having entered his Black Hawk War

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<sup>1</sup>Case of *Hurd et al. vs. Railroad Bridge Co.* See Hon. Peter A. Dey of Iowa City to Frederick Trevor Hill. *Century Magazine*, V. 71, p. 953.



land warrant in Crawford county.<sup>1</sup> Both Mr. Judd and Mr. Lincoln employed Mr. (later General) Grenville M. Dodge of Council Bluffs to attend to their interests in that region. Mr. Dodge was the surveyor of the line of the Rock Island's extension in Iowa. It was incident to his business relations with Mr. Judd of his directory board that he later took an active part at Chicago in furthering the nomination of Mr. Lincoln by the national Republican convention.<sup>2</sup>

In the spring of 1859 Mr. Lincoln again visited Iowa—and under circumstances that indicate the solid character of Mr. Lincoln's close relations with powerful industrial interests that are always potent and present in political councils. Some time in April, probably the latter part, he was attending court at Galena. He appeared in some cases affecting the Illinois Central Railroad Company—a corporation that had employed him almost from the time of the incorporation of the company in 1849.<sup>3</sup> He had won an important case for the company and between it and some later hearings or proceedings he made a visit to Dubuque, nearly opposite Galena, stopping for a day and a night at the Julien House, a well-known hostelry of that city. He came with a party of officials of the Illinois Central Company. He rode in a private car, on his own pass furnished him in his capacity as attorney for the company. The distinction of a private car and the privilege of free trans-

<sup>1</sup>Two of the three Bounty Land Warrants issued to Abraham Lincoln for military service in the Black Hawk War were filed for lands in Iowa. The first warrant No. 52,076 for forty acres (Act of 1850) issued April 16, 1852, was located on the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of section 20, in township 84 north of range 39. The entry was made at Dubuque, Iowa, by his attorney, John P. Davis, July 21, 1854. A patent was issued June 1, 1855.

The second No. 68,465, for 120 acres (Act of 1855) was issued April 22, 1856, and was located on the east half of the northeast quarter and the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of section 18 in township 84, range 39. Mr. Lincoln himself located or made the selection at Springfield, Ill., December 27, 1859. The patent was issued September 10, 1860.

The foregoing is taken from a letter of the Commissioner of the Land Office, June 27, 1865, quoted by Herndon and Weik *Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. I, p. 92. Mr. W. H. Terry, Recorder of Crawford county, wherein the entries for lands described should be made of record, writes that only for the last named tract was a patent issued to Abraham Lincoln; moreover, the number of the land warrant was 68,645 according to his record, and not 68,465. The entry for the first mentioned tract was made by Milton Santee, June 19, 1858, and the patent issued August 3, 1866, on Warrant No. 4672. W. H. Terry to the writer (MSS.), Sept. 16, and Oct. 4, 1909.

<sup>2</sup>General Grenville M. Dodge to the writer (MSS.) July 3, 1907, and Aug. 13, 1908; and interview, Nov. 17, 1908.

<sup>3</sup>*Abraham Lincoln, as Attorney for the Illinois Central Railroad Company*. The writer is in debt to Mr. J. G. Drennan, of Chicago, attorney for the company, for a copy of this rare Album.

portation greatly impressed some of the young Republican leaders of Dubuque (among the number being the late Senator Wm. B. Allison) who attended at the Julien House to observe the notables.

It is not clear whether Mr. Lincoln's visit to Dubuque was primarily in connection with the official party of the railroad company, then greatly interested in securing control of a western terminus in Dubuque and extensions into and through Iowa, or whether it was taken on his own initiative on account of private business or pleasure and happened to coincide with the official party's visit. The visit seems not to have attracted much public notice at the time although a number of lawyers of Dubuque called to pay their respects to Senator Douglas' great antagonist, some of whom long afterwards vividly remembered the occasion.<sup>1</sup> The visit in and of itself was not of particular political consequence. The circumstances of the visit, however, in the writer's judgment, bring into view a fact of the greatest significance. They exhibit the close, not to say, intimate relations Mr. Lincoln had as a lawyer with great and powerful industrial corporations: factors of the greatest potency in the decisions of political bodies.<sup>2</sup> It was this relationship, moreover, that in some part caused Mr. Lincoln to make another visit to Iowa and another speech in the State in 1859.

<sup>1</sup>Interview of Mr. James B. Morrow with Senator Wm. B. Allison, *Gated* at Washington, D. C., May 7, 1908; see *The Sioux City Journal*, May 10, 1909; and George Crane to the writer (MSS.), July 31, 1909. Mr. Crane was Mr. Allison's law partner at the time and attended at the Julien House with his professional associates.

<sup>2</sup>The following telegram will indicate the high standing of Mr. Lincoln with the managers of railroads for years preceding his nomination at Chicago:

"Chicago, Oct. 14. 1853.

"To Abraham Lincoln,  
Springfield, Ill.

Can you come here immediately and act as arbitrator in the crossing case between the Illinois Central and Northern Indiana R. R. Companies if you should be appointed? Answer and say yes if possible.  
(Signed) J. F. Jor."

The Mr. Joy signing the telegram was the organizer of the C., B. & Q. R. R. and a director of the Illinois Central at the time. *Cent. Mag.*, Vol. 71, p. 950, gives telegram. The original telegram may be found in the Collection of General Alfred Orendorff of Springfield, Ill.

Sometime in the latter part of July or in the forepart of August Mr. Lincoln made a trip to Kansas—whether exclusively on business or not is not clear. On his return, while stopping at St. Joseph, Missouri, he decided to make a visit to Council Bluffs and examine his land holdings, acquired from Mr. Judd, with a view doubtless to estimating the probable future of the city's commercial development and the prospect for enhancing land values. He was accompanied by Mr. O. M. Hatch, Secretary of State for Illinois. Their boat arrived at Council Bluffs Friday evening, August 12th. Speech-making seems not to have been contemplated by Mr. Lincoln, but two events conspired to make him address the citizens on political matters.

First, the leading citizens of the town without distinction of party, as soon as they knew of his presence besought him to make a speech. Second, the boat on which he was to return met with an accident and for two or three days he was unable to proceed. Another fact was influential. The Republicans of Iowa were in the midst of a strenuous state campaign and were making more than usual efforts to elect their candidates for governor and lieutenant-governor, Messrs. Samuel J. Kirkwood and Nicholas J. Rusch, and the normal political complexion of the "Missouri Slope," as that region was called, was Democratic. Furthermore, Council Bluffs was the home of Mr. Lysander W. Babbitt, the Democratic candidate for lieutenant-governor. The fame of the visitor and the exigencies of the political situation no doubt made the local political leaders more than ordinarily urgent in pressing the invitation upon Mr. Lincoln; and he too probably was not unmindful of the contingent advantages that might ensue from an effective speech in Iowa at such a point under such circumstances. At any rate *The Weekly Nonpareil*, the organ of the Republicans, contained the following announcement in its issue Saturday morning.

#### HEAR OLD ABE.

Hon. Abe Lincoln and the secretary of state for Illinois, Hon. O. M. Hatch, arrived in our city last eve, and are stopping at the Pacific House. The distinguished "Sucker" has yielded to the importunities

of our citizens without distinction of parties, and will speak on the political issues of the day at Concert Hall this evening. The celebrity of the speaker will most certainly insure him a full house. Go and hear Old Abe.

As was the case when Mr. Lincoln spoke at Burlington in October preceding, neither the substance, nor the main points, nor the nature of the speech was indicated in the press report and comment thereon: simply the manner and effectiveness of the speaker were characterized. The evening was divided between Mr. Lincoln and a Judge Test, one-time secretary of state for Indiana and then a recent convert from the Democratic party. The latter fact apparently was not known for some of the audience seems to have anticipated something in the nature of a joint debate between the two speakers; but both expressed similar views.<sup>1</sup> The next week's issue of *The Nonpareil* contains an editorial expression of about a quarter of a column from Mr. W. W. Maynard under the heading "Abe Lincoln," one of its paragraphs being devoted to the Illinoian and the other to the Indianian, with the major emphasis of laudation for Mr. Lincoln.

This distinguished gentleman addressed a very large audience of ladies and gentlemen at Concert Hall in this city Saturday evening last. In the brief limits of a newspaper article it were impossible even though we wielded the trenchant pen of a Babbitt (which we do not) to give an outline of his masterly and unanswerable speech—the clear and lucid manner in which he set forth the principles of the Republican party—the dexterity with which he applied the political scalpel to the Democratic carcass—beggars all description at our hands. Suffice it that the speaker fully and fairly sustained the great reputation he acquired in the memorable Illinois campaign as a man of great intellectual power—a close and sound reasoner.

At the close of Mr. Lincoln's remarks Judge Test of Indiana was called to the stand. The Judge spoke for near half an hour . . . both gentlemen endeared themselves to the Republicans by their praiseworthy efforts on this occasion.<sup>2</sup>

The foregoing announcement and comments, colored as they are by the favorable inclination of the editor's partisan preju-

<sup>1</sup>The *Sunday Nonpareil* (semi-centennial edition), Sept. 2, 1906—article "Visit of 'Abe' Lincoln to Council Bluffs," p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>The *Weekly Nonpareil*, Aug. 12, 1859. The writer is indebted to Mr. Henry Peterson, attorney of Council Bluffs, for the citations from *The Nonpareil* of 1859. He unearthed the files, when all information as to their whereabouts was adverse.

dice indicate very decidedly the keen popular interest in Mr. Lincoln in western Iowa and his celebrity as a powerful speaker. But the significance of the visit, aside from the speech is not appreciated; and there was of course but little suspicion of the bearing of the event upon the visitor's later career. His one particular object seems to have been to confer with his local representative about land values and their future prospects. The person who thus acted for him with whom he chiefly conferred, subsequently had a distinguished career in the nation's industrial, military and political affairs; and the writer has been fortunate in securing his recollections of Mr. Lincoln's visit and speech. The following extracts are reproduced from notes of an interview with General Grenville M. Dodge.

My first interest in Abraham Lincoln came about as a result of business interest. I had had business relations for some time with N. P. Judd of Illinois who was Mr. Lincoln's manager in the campaign before the Chicago convention. I looked after some land interests for them in and about Council Bluffs.

I first met Mr. Lincoln at Council Bluffs in August, 1859. He had come up there by way of St. Joseph and the Missouri river to look after an interest in the Riddle tract that he had bought from Mr. Judd.

I had just returned with my party from a surveying trip, and we camped in a ravine just north of the town, and had come down to the Pacific House to get a square meal.

He heard of the arrival of the engineering party and sought me out at the hotel. We sat down on the porch of the Pacific House and he proceeded to find out all about the country we had been through and all about our railroad surveys, the character of the country, particularly its adaptability to settlement, its topographical features, in fact, he extracted from me the information I had gathered from my surveyors, and virtually shelled my woods most thoroughly.

When Mr. Lincoln first spoke in Council Bluffs in August, 1859, I was interested in him chiefly because he had been Judd's friend and because he had been an attorney for the Rock Island road. Knowing something of his reputation produced by the debates with Douglas and because of his relations with Judd and the Rock Island I went over to the Square where he was to speak.

There are no accounts of the speech that give any details as to what he said except perhaps in a very vague way. He dwelt largely upon the slavery question—the great subject in which we folks on the "Missouri Slope" were then, as was the whole country, much



interested. Mr. Lincoln set forth his views of the slavery question in connection with the settlement of the territory just across the Missouri river. The settlement of the new territory interested him very much and its commercial development was much in his mind. In the course of his speech he took occasion to commend the advanced stand taken by Kirkwood in his campaign for governor. I went with Kirkwood to some of the towns in the western part of the State in which he spoke. Kirkwood was regarded by a good many as pretty strong on the slavery question. It was natural that Mr. Lincoln should say a good word on his behalf.

Before the speech I had no very definite ideas about Mr. Lincoln: but that speech settled the matter. He convinced the most of those who heard him that he knew what he was talking about and that he knew how to put the issues so as to bring out the strong points of the Republican position. He made many strong friends in our part of the State at the time.

Mr. Lincoln stayed with Messrs. Thomas Officer and W. H. M. Pusey while in town—they had formerly lived in Springfield, Illinois.

Years after it was the conversation at the Pacific House that led to the fixing of the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific at Council Bluffs.<sup>1</sup>

There was some but not much notice of the visit and the speech by the press of the State. At Des Moines Mr. Teesdale refers to the presence and address of the "distinguished" Illinoisian in Council Bluffs and he asserts that the Republicans were "delighted with the effort and do not wonder at the popularity of Old Abe at home." He concludes by declaring: "... the Republicans of Iowa are under especial obligations to Mr. L."<sup>2</sup> The editors of the Democratic paper make note of the event in contemptuous terms: "Lincoln, the would-be Senator from Illinois who was so badly beaten on the stump and at the polls by Douglas was in Council Bluffs last week and made a speech."<sup>3</sup>

One fact is made evident in the foregoing. The familiar terms employed by Messrs. Maynard and Teesdale in referring to Mr. Lincoln, such as, "Abe" and "Old Abe," indicate that his name and fame were common household stock; the editors' language implied no derogation; rather an assumption that all

<sup>1</sup>Interview with General Grenville M. Dodge, Des Moines, Nov. 17, 1908.

<sup>2</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Aug. 24, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*The Campaign Journal*, Aug. 18, 1859.

knew him or about him and held him in the esteem of familiar colloquial acquaintance.

Roundabout or following the visit to Council Bluffs a report seems to have become current in Keokuk that Mr. Lincoln would attend a session of the federal court in that city in September. Forthwith Mr. Hawkins Taylor, an active leader of the Republicans in the Gate City, took measures to secure a speech and wrote him. Mr. Taylor received a reply under date of September 6th, as follows:

There is some mistake about my expected attendance of the United States court in your city on the third Tuesday of this month. I have no thought of being there. It is bad to be poor. I shall go to the wall for bread and meat, if I neglect my business this year as well as last. It would please me much to see the city and good people of Keokuck, but for this year it is little less than an impossibility.<sup>1</sup>

"I am constantly receiving invitations which I am compelled to decline. I was pressingly urged to go to Minnesota and I now have two invitations to go to Ohio. These last are prompted by Douglas going there, & I am really tempted to make a flying trip to Columbus & Cincinnati.

"I do hope you will have no serious trouble in Iowa. What thinks Grimes about it? I have not known him to be mistaken about an election in Iowa. Present my respects to Colonel Curtis & other friends, and believe me.

Yours truly,

A. LINCOLN.

Notwithstanding his financial straits, the pressure of the political campaign in the country at large was so great as to induce the writer of that letter two weeks later to go to Ohio in pursuit of his old antagonist, Senator Douglas, "driving nails in his track" in two notable speeches at Columbus and Cincinnati.

Following Mr. Lincoln's appearance at Council Bluffs and no doubt in consequence of it he received another invitation to speak in the canvass in Iowa. Mr. John A. Kasson, as chairman of the Republican state central committee, was in no small degree charged personally with the practical respon-

<sup>1</sup> Original in Aidrich Collections, Historical Department of Iowa.

<sup>2</sup> The reasons for the worry of the Republicans in the canvass of 1859 are set forth by the writer in THE ANNALS, Vol. VIII, 206-217.

sibility for the successful issue of the state campaign. The Democrats were making more than common efforts to regain the State, having in General A. C. Dodge a very strong candidate for governor. Mr. Kasson had substantial reasons for anxiety as to the outcome<sup>2</sup> and alertly sought effective speakers. Under date of September 13th Mr. Kasson addressed Mr. Lincoln, a brief note:

Will it be possible for you to visit Oskaloosa in this State, at the State Fair, say the 28th, Sept', and speak there, and perhaps at one or more other places.

It is earnestly desired you should visit the State if possible.<sup>1</sup>

The invitation, however, was unavailing, for the reason probably that Mr. Lincoln by the date he received it was busily preparing for his speeches in Ohio or was already on his way to that State. At least there seems to have been no favorable response.<sup>2</sup>

It is not clear why Mr. Lincoln should have been indisposed to cross the river and make some speeches at various important points in eastern Iowa in the campaign of 1859. His visit to Council Bluffs seems to have been accidental or at least not pre-arranged. He went to Kansas both before and after his speech at Council Bluffs: and he went to Ohio and to Wisconsin before his second visit to Kansas. The invasion of Ohio by his old antagonist was sufficient inducement for him to follow. But Wisconsin was as certainly Republican as Iowa, while Iowa was a State with eight votes in the forthcoming national convention and Kansas was a territory with but six possible votes. The tremendous popular furore over "Bleeding Kansas" probably explains his sacrifices of time, energy, and means in Kansas and his comparative indifference to appeals from Iowa.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The writer is indebted to the courtesy of Hon. Robert T. Lincoln of Chicago for Mr. Kasson's note given above, who presented him with the original, together with its envelope on which is an autograph notation of President Lincoln.

<sup>2</sup>Hon. Robert T. Lincoln to the writer Feb. 1, 1909, and Mr. Chas. Kasson Wead for Hon. John A. Kasson, Jan. 8, 1909.

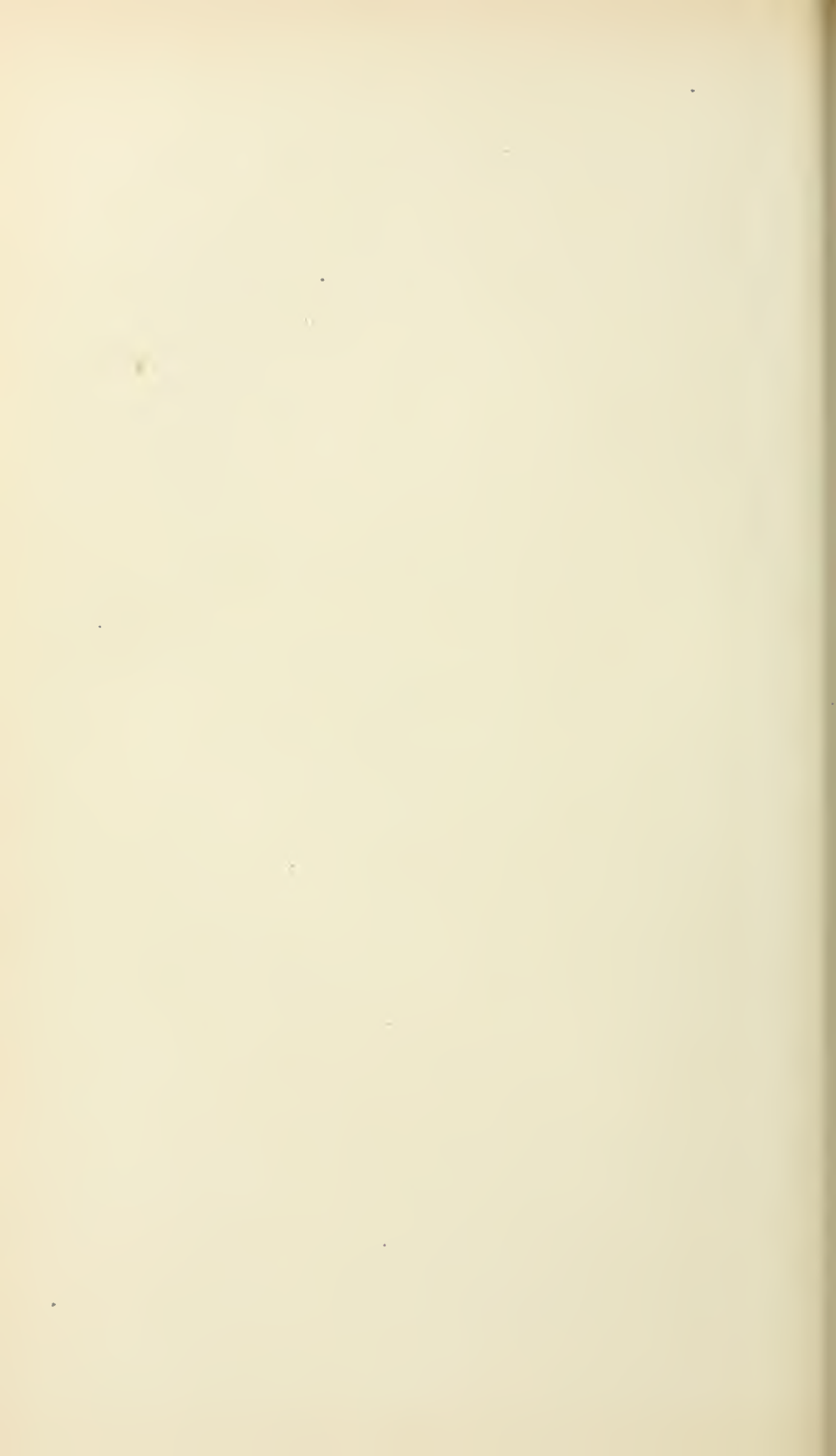
<sup>3</sup>Mr. Lincoln had another basis of interest in Iowa and Iowans. Messrs. Herndon and Lamon both declare that no fact had a more profound influence upon his character and career than his love for Miss Anne Rutledge of New Salem. Her untimely death in 1835, it is asserted, accounts

There are few signs of any systematic effort to secure action that would promote the nomination of Mr. Lincoln. The suggestion of Mr. Holmes of Marion already noted, might have contemplated some action by the special state convention called for January 18, 1860, to select the delegates to attend the national convention. In one instance, however, instructions were given. The Republicans of Newton in their resolutions instructing for Salmon P. Chase for President directed their county delegates to work to secure the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for Vice-President.<sup>1</sup> One thing is obvious. The name of Mr. Lincoln received as much consideration in Iowa in connection with the Presidency in 1859 both in informal discussion and in formal party action as that of his chief competitor at the national convention.

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largely for the clouds of melancholy that so constantly hovered about him. Even after his election to the Presidency he is reported to have said to an old friend from whom he was seeking information about old acquaintances: "I have loved the name of Rutledge to this day. I have kept my mind on their movements ever since, . . ." (Lamon, *Life*, p. 169). Some members of the Rutledge family moved to southern Iowa during the fifties. Robert B. Rutledge was one of the pioneers of Van Buren county whose name appears in its calendar of Notables (*History of Van Buren County*, p. 378). He was elected Sheriff of that county in 1857 serving from 1858 to 1862. During the Civil War he was appointed Provost Marshal in 1863, with headquarters at Burlington, serving in the latter capacity until October 31, 1865. (*War of Rebellion—Records*, Series III, Vol. V, 906). We may safely surmise that the appointment was the result of President Lincoln's personal interest in him and his family. After the war Mrs. James Rutledge, mother of the brother and sister just mentioned, lived for a time at Oskaloosa. The writer is indebted to Mr. E. R. Harlan, Curator of the Historical Department, for the foregoing relative to Robert Rutledge's career in Iowa; and to Mr. Welker Given of Des Moines for the last fact mentioned.

<sup>1</sup>The Gate City, Jan. 11, 1860.





## REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL PRELIMINARIES IN IOWA—1859-1860.

### 1. *The First Party Maneuvers in 1859.*

Victory in political contests, as in military operations, depends no less upon the possession of strategic points and the masterful use of the machinery and technique of procedure, than upon concourses of adherents. Inferior forces directed by masters of strategy and tactics are usually successful over preponderant numbers or mere masses unorganized or illy controlled and directed. Candidates or their friends and promoters realize these facts. They begin early to run out their lines, set their stakes, build their fences and hedge against rushes and surprises, to use the jargon of politicians. The leaders in charge of the machinery of the party may ally themselves with this or that wing or faction, or further the interests of a particular candidate; if there seems to be a fair prospect of success they then strive to have the machinery operate in his behalf. Or, they may perceive that the party's choice of a standard bearer is not a matter to be decided solely upon grounds of personal affiliations, or factional or sectional interests but, if victory is to be achieved, such choice must be determined upon considerations insuring the maximum efficiency of the party's forces in the aggregate. Complete alignment, certainty and unity of purpose, capacity for hearty co-operation, prompt co-ordination and concentration whereby a party's strength can be easily directed and hurled against the weak points of the Opposition, are the prerequisites of success. Premature action, however, is no less to be avoided than dilatory measures. The former create serious reactions inimical to candidates because the majority of a party are interested in causes rather than men, and hasty action, such as early rushes to capture caucuses or conventions, suggests "snap

judgments'' and seems to imply that the promoters of a candidate fear adverse results from full, fair and open discussion and deliberate decision.

(a) The Selection of Delegates Proposed.

It cannot now probably be definitely stated when the first maneuvers were instituted for securing the favor of Iowa's Republican leaders or determining the attitude of the party in respect of the presidential succession in 1860. There is some evidence, however, that both friends and promoters of candidates and also some of the party leaders of the State contemplated active measures early in 1859, with a view to controlling the action of Iowa at the national convention.

On March 26th an official call for a Republican state convention to meet in Des Moines, June 22d, was issued by the state central committee. The call, after stating the immediate specific purpose of the convention to be the nomination of candidates for various state offices to be elected at the ensuing election, included the further announcement that—"The convention will take such other action as may, in its opinion, contribute to the success of the principles and organization of the Republican party of this State and of the Union." Of the seven members of the committee signing the call, five were afterwards selected (or as alternates or proxies, acted) as delegates of the party at the Chicago convention. They were Mr. John A. Kasson, chairman, and Mr. H. M. Hoxie, both of Des Moines, Mr. N. J. Rusch of Davenport, Mr. R. L. B. Clarke of Mount Pleasant and Mr. Thomas Seeley of Guthrie Center.

Following within a week or so, word was apparently given out that it would be advisable for the approaching convention to select the delegates to the next national convention, for Mr. Palmer of the Dubuque *Times* observed: "The question has arisen among some of the leading Republicans whether the state convention . . . should not choose delegates to the next Republican national convention. If there is any purpose or any necessity of making the choice at that time, the party throughout the State should know it, that they may be represented accordingly."<sup>1</sup> The reception accorded the sug-

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in *The Muscatine Daily Journal*, April 26, 1859.

gestion was somewhat various. Mr. Mahin looked upon it with approval. "We think," he declares, "it would be a fit time to choose such delegates. The call, as published, confers the power on the convention, and as another state convention will not, in all probability, be held before the national convention, the opportunity ought to be improved for the appointment of delegates. Let us have a general expression from the Republican press on this subject, and let it be understood that delegates are to be appointed."<sup>1</sup> The proposition was given more or less approval, *The Cedar Valley Times* concurring with *The Journal*; but for the major part it encountered sharp disapproval.

Mr. Howell repelled the suggestion instantly. "The idea of electing delegates to the national convention," he declared, "ought not to be entertained for a moment. There is no propriety in doing so, nor is there the slightest necessity for such haste. It is highly probable that the national convention will meet at Wheeling on the 17th of June, 1860, and our state convention next year can very properly come off about the first of June, at which time candidates for state offices and delegates to the national convention, duly imbued with the sentiments and fully instructed as to the preferences of the Republicans of Iowa, can be selected."<sup>2</sup> *The Iowa City Republican* was likewise adverse. Mr. Jerome, the editor, pointed out that "the wish of the party [relative to the candidate] is now unknown. Twelve months hence it will find unanimous expression. The man will come with the hour. Let us wait for both."<sup>3</sup> Mr. Drummond reprinted the *Republican's* views as expressing his own.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Teesdale, while opposing the selection of delegates at the forthcoming Convention, put out the equivocal suggestion that it would be well "to give expression to the sentiment of the State at the time the delegates were selected." One is not certain whether a preliminary expression by the state convention in June was suggested or resolutions of instruction at the time the delegates were later selected was contemplated.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, April 26, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, April 28, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*The Vinton Eagle* cites May 10, 1859. <sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>*The Weekly Citizen*, May 11, 1859.

Opinion adverse to either selection of delegates or to an expression of the party's preference in the matter of a candidate was evidently pronounced, for no affirmative action was attempted on the floor of the convention hall at Iowa City, June 22d. Nevertheless we may suspect serious designs. The language of the call already quoted, clearly had some definite proceedings in view. About the same time a similar suggestion was being acted upon with vigor in Oregon. The Republicans of that territory in their convention, April 21, 1859, instructed their delegates, selected at the time for the national convention "to use their influence to secure the nomination of Hon. W. H. Seward of New York, as candidate for President; but in case they cannot secure his nomination, then further proceedings are left to their discretion."<sup>1</sup> Whether the action contemplated by the movers in Iowa was designed to enure to the benefit of Bates or Seward or Cameron we perhaps cannot determine. Nevertheless the friends and promoters of those candidates were already instituting measures to secure the favor and active aid of party leaders in various sections of the country. Taking the personnel of the state central committee as a basis for judgment we may surmise that the design of the movement was favorable to the candidacy of Mr. Bates. Mr. Jerome, one of the signers, as we have seen, was opposed to action. Mr. Clarke, an ardent anti-slavery advocate, almost, if not an out-and-out abolitionist, was one of the staunch Seward men at Chicago the following year. Messrs. Kasson, Hoxie and Seeley were probably favorable to Mr. Bates, rather than Mr. Seward; and Mr. Rusch because of his relations with Mr. Kasson would doubtless have concurred with the colleagues just named; at least Messrs. Kasson and Hoxie gave their votes to Mr. Bates on the first ballot at Chicago.

<sup>1</sup>*The Oregon Statesman*, April 26, 1859. The writer is indebted to Mr. George H. Himes, Assistant Secretary and Curator of the Oregon Historical Society of Portland, for the citation above respecting the action of the Republicans of Oregon in 1859.

In view of the instructions given the Oregon delegates, it is interesting that on the first and second ballots in the Convention, Oregon's five votes were cast for Bates, and on the third, four went to Lincoln and one to Seward. See *N. Y. Herald*, May 13, 1860; or *N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.), May 22, 1860.

## (b) The Choice of the Convention City and Its Significance.

Meanwhile another maneuver was in progress that was not without influence in determining the party's choice at Chicago. For some time public spirited citizens in the larger cities of the west had been looking with designing eyes upon the members of the Republican national committee and making plans to secure its decision to hold the next national convention in their respective cities. The national Democratic convention in 1856 was held at Cincinnati; and citizens of Wheeling, Indianapolis, Chicago and St. Louis entertained lusty hopes of securing the Republican convention in 1860. From Mr. Howell's assertion previously quoted, it seems that Wheeling was generally accorded the presumption of the selection, but, as the event proved, without warrant. For the most part, of course, the motives animating those seeking the committee's favorable action were the issue of ordinary communal desires to enhance local fame and enjoy the eclat of such national gatherings. But other motives in other minds were probably the decisive factors in determining the selection of the convention city.

Environment is a condition, if not a determinant, of achievement in politics. Local influences may play a conspicuous and on occasion a vital part in the decisions of conventions. The location of the city wherein they are held, if remote from centers of population or difficult of access, may prevent many influential leaders and important elements participating in their deliberations, and thus seriously affect decisions. Moreover, the influences of a community, always numerous, omnipresent and vocal, sometimes subtle and subterranean, under the direction of alert, aggressive and intelligent leaders are often most potent in making things come to pass. They are not always decisive—are seldom the chief factors—unless other forces and considerations are evenly balanced; then local influences when concentrated and co-ordinated may force the tilt of the beam and decide the result.

Any one familiar with the ways of practical politicians to-day need not be told how carefully such matters are attended to by party leaders in closely contested political battles. We



may fairly presume that politicians fifty years ago were no less alert to such considerations. The friends and promoters of Chase, McLean and Wade, of Bates and Lincoln would naturally prefer to have the convention held west of the Alleghenies at or nearest the seat of their local fame and influence. If we could obtain access to their correspondence, or that of their managers or of the party chiefs in Iowa, we should doubtless find that the political effect of the locus of the convention was seriously canvassed. One of President Lincoln's most distinguished biographers tells us that the selection of the convention city was not made until February, 1860, and that the maneuver effecting the decision in favor of Chicago was the work of Norman P. Judd, member of the national committee from Illinois; and further, that the importance of the maneuver was realized by "no one except the Illinois politicians."<sup>1</sup> There are grounds for doubting the correctness of these assertions.

In the latter part of August, 1859, Senator James Harlan, then at his home in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, received a letter from Mr. John D. DeFrees of Indianapolis, Indiana. His correspondent was a man of considerable influence among the "Hoosiers." For many years he had been one of the leading editors of that state. At the time he was chairman of the Republican state central committee and was on the eve of starting a new Republican paper (*The Daily Atlas*);—a man,

<sup>1</sup>Miss Ida M. Tarbell, *Life of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. I, p. 339.

The passage in which the assertion is made is the following:—"February 16, 1860, '*The Tribune*' came out editorially for Lincoln, and Medill followed a few days later with a ringing letter from Washington, naming Lincoln as a candidate on whom both conservative and radical sentiment could unite. . . . About the time when Medill was writing thus, Norman P. Judd, as member of the Republican National Committee, was executing a maneuver the importance of which no one realized but the Illinois politicians. This was securing the convention for Chicago."

One of Mr. Lincoln's confreres, and later one of his biographers, Mr. W. C. Whitney, also gives the entire credit for securing the convention at Chicago to Mr. Judd. With some error he declares that all conventions had theretofore been held in the east and that Mr. Judd made the "novel proposition in the committee that the convention should be held at Chicago. He argued that the Democrats had departed from the ancient custom of meeting at Baltimore, and were to meet at Charleston; now, argued he, let us follow their example and meet in a region where we can make proselytes by the respect we pay to that region. He carefully kept "Old Abe" out of sight, and the delegates failed to see any personal bearing the place of meeting was to have on the nomination. Judd carried his point. He was a railway lawyer and he approached the various railway companies whose lines were in Illinois, and persuaded them to make very cheap rates of fare to Chicago during the convention week." *Lincoln The Citizen*, pp. 284-5; *Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol. I (edited by Miller).

we are told, who was regarded by Clay and Crittenden, Webster and Corwin as a very "adroit politician."<sup>1</sup> After referring to his new editorial duties and his purpose to advocate and pursue a moderate or "conservative" policy relative to national politics he says:

While I shall not war publicly on the extreme ground occupied by some of our friends, I know that Indiana cannot be carried on these grounds and hence the conservative spirit of my paper. I have been battling Democracy in all its infernal phases, for more than thirty years and I want to see it crushed out before I die. It can not be done (in my opinion) if ultra men are permitted to dictate our policy, and name our candidate.

As I suggested to you when we rode on the cars together, it would be a good move to get the national convention held out West somewhere (Indianapolis if you please) so as to be out of the outside influence always created anywhere in the neighborhood of New York—Gov. Lowe of your State, is one of the committee to fix time and place. Please talk with him on this subject.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. DeFrees' letter reflects a concern lest radicalism should seize the rank and file and force the nomination of an extremist for President who would work the party's defeat in the doubtful states—a concern that one discovers to be pronounced among all the old party wheelhorses in those states. This dread manifested itself in 1859 and 1860 in earnest pleas and in plans for an "Anti-Seward" program rather than in direct, insistent, systematic efforts to push the nomination of a "favorite son" or the favorite of a faction or of a section. Indiana had no candidate, but her population was for the most part composed of people of southern antecedents, affiliations and sympathies (Mr. DeFrees was himself a Tennessean) and the *ultra* notions of the anti-slavery propagandists were received by them with but little favor. Idealistic sentiment, that prompts a party to plunge ahead of the traditions and common sense of the people, or to run counter to popular prejudices, is a rock of offense and not a force making for success. It is clear from Mr. DeFrees' letter that the opponents of Governor Seward must have been canvassing the ad-

<sup>1</sup>Appleton's *Cyclopedia of American Biography*, Vol. II, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup>James Harlan, *Autobiographical Manuscript*, p. 3043. For permission to cite and use the letter above the writer is indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Robert T. Lincoln of Chicago, and to Dr. B. F. Shambaugh of the State Historical Society of Iowa, and Mr. Johnson Brigham, State Librarian, the latter having the manuscript in their custody.

visability of securing the convention in a western city some time prior to the date of his letter. The significance of his attitude and the importance of the maneuver in contemplation, are effectively stated by Senator Harlan himself, who, on rereading it some thirty-five years later, made the following comment: “. . . He, as he says, was an Old School Whig prior to the organization of the Republican party, and as sternly opposed to every thing bordering on ‘abolitionism’ as the slave-holding element of the Southern States. So were nearly all of the leaders of the Republican party in Indiana. And he and they had already commenced to put up fortifications against the possible nomination of Wm. H. Seward, as the Republican candidate for President in 1860. And Mr. Seward was probably defeated by this influence in the national convention; supplemented, of course, by sympathizers from other western States.”<sup>1</sup>

The national committee had the matter of the selection of the convention city under advisement for a considerable time. In April the citizens of Wheeling presented a memorial to the committee seeking a decision favorable to that city.<sup>2</sup> On May 25th, the committee met at Albany, New York, and although some twenty members were present, no decision as to time and place could be reached. The report made via the dispatches read—“The proceedings are strictly private but it is thought the decision will be in favor of holding the convention at St. Louis, Mo., or some other place in Virginia.”<sup>3</sup> Evidently at that time, either representatives of the west or anti-Seward members outnumbered the Seward members of the committee. The matter hung fire for some time. In the latter part of the year the subject was “agitated in different localities,” St. Louis, Chicago and Indianapolis being “the most prominent places named.”<sup>4</sup> The press in Iowa does not appear to have paid much attention to the question. One editor, however, expressed a decided preference. Mr. Jerome declared in favor of Chicago as his first choice, of St. Louis as his second and of

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.* p. 3049. For the prominent part played by Mr. DeFrees at the Chicago Convention see McClure's *Our Presidents*, etc., pp. 155-156.

<sup>2</sup>*The Express and Herald* (Dubuque), April 19, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, May 26, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, Dec. 15, 1859.

Indianapolis as his third choice.<sup>1</sup> The decision was not made until December 22d following. The committee met in New York City. The part taken by Iowa in the meeting is not certain. Governor Lowe had ceased to be a member. His place had been filled by Mr. Andrew J. Stevens, a banker and broker of Des Moines, who was then or later, an advocate of Governor Seward's nomination. At the time of the meeting of the committee he could not attend, his proxy and vote being held and exercised by Senator J. R. Doolittle of Wisconsin.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Judd of Illinois concurred naturally in the action of the committee and he was no doubt one of the effective promoters of the movement making for the decision, but it would appear that he was only one of many conspiring to secure the benefit of local environment adverse to the candidacy of the Senator from New York.

The contrariety of minds relative to the significance of the action of the committee is illustrated in an interesting and significant fashion in the editorial comments of two editors of opposite political faith. Mr. Jerome of Iowa City expressed himself as follows: ". . . we think it eminently fit that a city which has maintained her republicanism amidst such opposition, 'bearding the Douglas in his den,' richly deserves this flattering testimonial. Chicago herself is a true type and representative of the already great and growing Republican party . . . She is emphatically a *free* city. Her merchants are not satellites and flunkys—they do not, as Philadelphia and some other cities have done, propose to sell their principles with their goods. Political auctions have not, and we trust never will, come into vogue with her people."<sup>3</sup> The work of Douglas' opponent evidently was the matter in mind. Mr. F. M. Zieback of Sioux City observed: "The selection of this hotbed of abolitionism as the place for holding their convention will not do much towards enhancing the prospect of Republicanism among the more conservative portion of the party. It is a stroke of policy, however, on the part of the friends of Lincoln which will doubtless place him upon the

<sup>1</sup>*Iowa City Weekly Republican*, Dec. 7, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*N. Y. Tribune* (s. w.), Dec. 23, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*Iowa Weekly Republican*, December 28, 1859.

ticket for Vice-President."<sup>1</sup> Clearly up in the farthest corner of the State, Abraham Lincoln was not "an Unknown," nor was he regarded as a negligible quantity in the political contest then approaching its crisis. The significance of Mr. Zieback's comment is not lessened by the fact that he was a Democrat.

(c) Call for the Special State Convention.

Meantime, about two weeks preceding the determination of the date and place for holding the national Republican convention a call was issued December 5, by the state central committee, for a special Republican state convention to be held in Des Moines, January 18, 1860, to choose delegates to the national convention. The matter was under consideration during November. Mr. Hildreth, a member of the committee, tells us.<sup>2</sup> Mr. John A. Kasson who, as chairman, signed the call, says therein that it was issued in "accordance with the general expression of public sentiment." The justification for the assembly so many months before the national convention was put upon two grounds. First the national convention "would be held at a much earlier date than is usually appointed for calling a state convention for the nomination of state officers," and second, it was "most convenient to procure a general representation of counties during the session of the legislature."<sup>3</sup>

As the Republicans of nearly all of the northern or free states did not call their state conventions until the next year was well advanced toward the date set for the national convention, one cannot repress some curiosity respecting the real reasons for not thus waiting in this instance. The postponement for two months would still have enabled members of the state legislature to serve as delegates from their respective counties. There is more than the shadow of a reason for thinking that another consideration besides the selection of delegates to the Chicago convention might have been in the minds of some of the members of the state central committee

<sup>1</sup>*The Register*, Dec. 31, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, Nov. 24, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.*, Dec. 22, 1859.



when they concurred in calling the special convention for January 18th.

The term of Iowa's senior Senator, James Harlan, was about expiring. His successor was to be chosen by the legislature which was to convene in Des Moines, January 9. Senator Harlan desired re-election and his renomination by his party was generally assumed and conceded. Nevertheless, there were sundry, and not a few either, who did not favor his re-election enthusiastically. Some, perhaps, because of personal reasons, such as discontent with his course at Washington: some because of his "locality"—his home Mt. Pleasant was a short distance from Burlington, the home of his colleague, James W. Grimes: some because they were not unwilling to succeed him if chance might offer. Senator Harlan's friends in various parts of the State detected signs of attempts at the furtherance of the senatorial ambition of some of the party leaders and in some anxiety warned him of the fact.<sup>1</sup> In the middle of December political circles were stirred by an editorial in *The Nonpareil* of Council Bluffs in which Mr. Maynard plumply protested against the assumption that Mr. Harlan had any claim to be his own successor that the party or the people were in honor bound to recognize; rather, the members of the general assembly should canvass men regardless of particular services or sacrifices and select the best man. Mr. Dunham of *The Daily Hawk-Eye* endorsed the sentiments with considerable emphasis.<sup>2</sup>

If there was any design adverse to Senator Harlan's re-election to the national Senate in the date fixed for the state convention it was conceived in the hope that the concurrence of the convention with the opening of the general assembly might produce a situation favorable to serious disturbances in the alignment of the Senator's forces. The selection of the speaker of the lower house engenders frequently intense feeling among the rival aspirants. The assignment of members to committees in the respective houses and the appointment of the various clerks and state officers by the legislative caucus, often produces furious animosities and the acids

<sup>1</sup>Autobiographical MSS.

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Dec. 26, 1859.

of disappointed hopes may cause all sorts of reactionary movements whereby enemies and rivals may secure benefits. If such hopes were indulged the desire of many to attend the national convention at Chicago as delegates would increase the trading stock of those who sought thus to manipulate the situation. Whatever the design might have been it was futile, for Senator Harlan was re-elected without dissent from his own party workers.

The call for the convention elicited but a few comments or suggestions. Indeed one is likely to suffer from surprise at the general indifference and non-attention to the work it was designed to accomplish. Sundry facts may explain the popular inattention. Congress met for the most momentous session in its history. The President's message contained references and recommendations that were as firebrands thrown into a tinder box. The deadlock over the election of the Speaker, the hubbub created by congressional endorsement of Helper's *Impending Crisis*, and the denunciation and recrimination resulting from the attack on Harper's Ferry—all these matters and others absorbed public attention to the exclusion of most local matters. There were, however, a few expressions worth noting, for they illustrate again with force and point the general attitude urged by prudent party leaders as the appropriate course for the party to pursue in selecting its representatives, and their proper procedure in selecting the party's standard bearer for the campaign to ensue.

Mr. Teesdale briefly commends the date fixed for the convention for the reason assigned in the call and emphasizes the urgent need for a large representation from all counties so that the "true sentiment of the State" may be faithfully reflected by the men selected to go to Chicago. He asserts that "nothing but the wildest imprudence and folly on the part of the Republican national convention, can prevent the election of a Republican President and Vice-President in 1860. In order to insure wise action in the national body, the action of the state body must be judicious and wise; the success of the cause being the paramount consideration."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, Dec. 14, 1859.

From one newspaper not heretofore cited came an editorial worthy particular attention for its significance and suggestions. Among the accessions to the ranks of the Republican party in the campaign of 1859 was Mr. Henry P. Scholte of Pella, the city founded in 1846 under his guidance by a body of Dutch Pilgrims, emigrants from Holland because of religious persecution. Although not always dominant in its communal life he was until his death unquestionably its most influential citizen. On coming to this country his antagonism to strong central government caused him to affiliate with the Democratic party. Its attitude toward foreigners further encouraged him. On the subject of Slavery he was a stout opponent of the system, but followed Henry Clay in maintaining the rights of owners of slaves against the attacks of abolitionists.<sup>1</sup> The repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the Kansas-Nebraska bill distressed him greatly but he did not join the Republicans in 1856 because of the "impression that Know-Nothingism and Abolitionism were the predominant consideration in its councils."<sup>2</sup> The scandal in connection with the Lecompton constitution in Kansas was too much for him and he joined the Republicans in the spring or early summer of 1859. His change of party faith made a considerable disturbance because of his great influence in Pella where he had long guided the majority in political discussion by means of *The Pella Gazette*, which he both published and edited.<sup>3</sup> On reading the call for the special convention he expressed himself in the following editorial entitled "Presidential Candidates":

Several states will present candidates for President and Vice-President at the next national Republican convention. We have no doubt but the Republicans of Iowa will heartily sustain the nominees of that convention. Iowa will send her delegates, but has not, at present, to propose one of her sons as a candidate. We think it, therefore, not expedient for Republican papers in Iowa to propose,

<sup>1</sup>*American Slavery in reference to the Present Agitation in the United States By an Adopted Citizen.* This rare and interesting book consists of editorials on the subject written by Mr. Scholte for *The Pella Gazette* between June 7, 1855, and November 8, 1856. The writer is under obligations to Hon. Henry L. Bousquet, Clerk of the Supreme Court, and Mr. Henry Scholte of Pella for the privilege of examining both the book and the files of *The Gazette*.

<sup>2</sup>*The Pella Gazette*, August 10, 1859.

<sup>3</sup>*ib.*, Dec. 14, 1859.

at present, any name as their particular choice, but at least wait till we have had our state convention to elect delegates to the national convention. Should our state convention deem it proper and necessary to instruct their delegates to go for any one of the main candidates then there will be some propriety in the Republican papers advocating the claims of such candidates. But, if on the contrary, our state convention deems it proper not to give such instructions but give to the delegates power to cast their vote in the national convention for such candidates as they shall there discover to be the strongest men, we think it best then for the Republican papers in Iowa to await the national convention, and when the nomination is there perfected to hoist the names of those candidates at the head of their column and then work faithfully and earnestly till we have gained the victory next November. We consider such a course best for the Republican party and for the candidates nominated at the national convention.

Here again we have prudence urging cautious and conservative conduct. Politics is an eminently practical matter. Success depends no less upon rapid adjustments to conditions than upon the possession of forces and supporters; and conditions are usually confused and confusing, shifting with kaleidoscopic facility and profusion. The editorial has added interest from the fact that the convention soon to convene at Des Moines selected Mr. Scholte as one of the party's delegates at large to the national convention; and his course fulfilled his own advice.

This narrative of developments in 1859 may fittingly close with an excerpt from one of Iowa's great party leaders to another party chieftain then about to enter upon a distinguished career in our State and national history—both men masters of the tactics and strategy of politics. The letter was written to Governor-elect Kirkwood by Senator James W. Grimes, and was dated at Washington, D. C., December 26, 1859. It aptly and adequately reflects and summarizes the attitude of the party leaders and of the rank and file of the Republican party in Iowa towards the nomination of their candidate for President.

DEAR KIRKWOOD:

The State Convention soon assembles to appoint delegates to the Chicago convention. Do not let the delegates be instructed and

send men who are not mere traders in politics. You ought to be one of the delegates and I hope you will see to it that you are appointed. I would select a goodly number to cast the vote of Iowa.

If you appoint electors I would suggest Samuel Miller of Keokuk and Wilson of Fairfield. They are both efficient canvassers and would help our congressional and state candidates a good deal. We must have a thorough canvass of the State next year and bring our majority up to six or eight thousand. Have good men appointed delegates and have them divided fairly between old Whigs and old Democrats, and entirely uncommitted to any man or men, who will try to nominate for the good of the party and not for the benefit of themselves.

Yours,

JAMES W. GRIMES.<sup>1</sup>

The Samuel Miller referred to was Samuel F. Miller afterwards appointed by President Lincoln Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. The "Wilson of Fairfield" was James F. Wilson, then rapidly rising in state fame in the state legislature, who as one of Iowa's delegates at the Chicago convention, worked from first to last for the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for President and afterwards had a distinguished career in both houses of Congress.

<sup>1</sup>*Correspondence of Gov. Sam'l J. Kirkwood in Aldrich Collection, in Historical Department of Iowa at Des Moines.*

Those familiar with the history of Iowa and of Congress will appreciate the warrant for Senator Grimes' assertion that Mr. Jas. F. Wilson was an "efficient" canvasser; but few will realize its fitness in the case of Mr. Samuel F. Miller. All chroniclers refer to his reputation as a cogent and powerful pleader at the bar of his county and of the Supreme Court of Iowa; but no one refers, so far as the writer knows, to his strength in the popular forum. Inquiry of General John W. Noble of St. Louis, who practiced in the same courts with Mr. Miller from 1855 to 1862 elicited the information that in public debate "he was superbly aggressive both in argument and in gesture and voice; and he flinched not at any conclusion to which his premises logically lead him." In the campaign of 1860 he threw himself with "that energy and intellectual force of which he possessed so much, and he was as daring a leader in debate as he would have been in a cavalry charge. . . ." General Noble then relates Mr. Miller's discussion with Judge J. M. Love at Keokuk of the issues of that campaign and the fears of Disunion in case Mr. Lincoln was elected and the dramatic and thrilling rejoinder of Mr. Miller, particularly when, with intense feeling, he said, "Sir, if these principles when duly adopted by the people of the United States, because distasteful to a minority, whether North or South, may lead to conflict of arms, I, for one, will abide the issue. I, for one, would rather see, if see I must, bayonets crossed over the ballot box, than not to have the ballot's decree carried into effect, even by the whole force of my country's power." The effect was "electric." Letter of General John W. Noble to the writer, St. Louis, Mo., February 17, 1910.



## 2. *The First Party Decision in 1860.*

When Iowans began their reckonings in January, 1860, the surface of the waters exhibited but few signs of strenuous activity in state or national politics. There was no uproar, and no general fuss, as the forces and factors contending for power and places were not concentrating sufficiently so that partisan passions and factional prejudices upheaved in foam and fury; but here and there commotion was considerable, for the currents were running with vigor. We must appreciate somewhat the nature, velocity and momentum of the major currents in order to realize the conditions under which the Republicans of Iowa made their first substantial decision in determining their attitude towards party principles, procedure and candidates in the presidential contest of 1860.

### (a) Contrary Considerations Affecting Party Interests.

The Legislature of Iowa was due to assemble at Des Moines in regular session, January 9th, and all classes contemplated its sessions with miscellaneous hopes and fears—all parties conceded that it would be one of the “most important sessions ever held in this state.”<sup>1</sup> The Republicans had complete possession of all the offices of the State, executive, judicial and legislative. Their leaders represented the State in both houses of Congress. They held their supremacy by a narrow margin, however, the campaign of 1859 taxing their strength to the uttermost. The problems and perplexities of the party leaders when the chiefs began to ingather at the state capital for the inauguration of Governor-elect Samuel J. Kirkwood, were numerous and pressing.

The friends and guardians of the “Maine” law, prohibiting the sale of intoxicating beverages, were greatly incensed at the progressive imbecility in its administration, due to the insertion of “wine and beer” clauses and the elastic interpretations of “mechanical, medicinal and sacramental” purposes in the law’s exemptions. They insisted upon drastic strengthening, while the enemies of the law—the Germans

<sup>1</sup>*The Dubuque Herald*, January 4, 1860.

preeminently—belligerently demanded radical relief from its irksome provisions. The foreign born in the State—and here again the Germans chiefly—were uneasy and exhibited a bellicose temperament. Both the outgoing Governor in his message and the incoming Governor in his inaugural address urged the passage of a “Registry Law” which all knew would mainly and immediately affect aliens adversely, and they, mindful of the “Two Year Amendment” in Massachusetts in 1859, were very suspicious and insistent upon marked consideration. The situation was more forcefully than politely described in the reported remark of a Republican editor, who said: “To get an office at the hands of the Legislature, a man must be born again—born in Germany by G——!”<sup>1</sup>

But for the most part, anxieties and ambitions anent finance and commerce animated the public mind. Industry after much blood-letting, was recovering with painful slowness from the severe depression following in the wake of the panic of 1857,<sup>2</sup> the worst effects of which were not felt in Iowa until 1859.<sup>2</sup> Resulting in considerable measure therefrom, the finances of the State were in a bad way. Public accounts in city, county and state administrations were generally in sorry confusion and charges of malversation and misappropriation were common. The school funds of the State were particularly thus affected—interest thereon to the amount of \$120,000—an enormous amount at that time—being in default at the time Governor Lowe sent in his message to the Legislature, January 10th. The State, county and city treasuries were all seriously embarrassed by deficits due to delinquent taxes and local discussion was highly charged with the bitter animosities issuing from “tax sales” and resulting ouster of delinquents. But banks and railroads engaged the major interests of the public.

From 1838 to 1858, Iowa had virtually denied herself banks of note issue. The inconvenience and distress resulting secured a constitutional amendment in 1857 that permitted the establishment of the State Bank of Iowa in 1858. Its organization,

<sup>1</sup>*Daily Iowa State Journal*, January 16, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>Gov. R. P. Lowe, *Message to Senate and House of Representatives*, January 10, 1860.

or rather the organization of its branches, progressed amidst some misadventure that was greatly magnified by reason of the general industrial depression. Just when business was getting righted, commercial confidence, particularly in eastern central Iowa, suffered a violent shock on December 16, 1859, from the failure of a prominent banking house of Davenport. That institution was the chief sponsor of the notes of a notorious "wild cat" bank located at Florence, Nebraska—one of the members of the firm being a director of the branch of the State Bank at Davenport.<sup>1</sup> Then, as now, private bankers were alert and aggressive in furthering their interests and their secret caucuses aroused popular prejudices.<sup>2</sup> Cries of "monopoly" and broad hints of fell designs among the money changers and "note shavers" were common, and these gained much credence among the discontented when Governor Lowe in his message, declared his hostility to "Free Banks," and recommended that the notes of the State Bank be made legal tender for taxes and its branches fiscal agents of the State and counties.

Railroads, however, comprised the greatest complex of interests that induced the public to concentrate its attention upon the Legislature in January, 1860. Then as now, these powerful agencies stirred the animosities and ambitions of politicians and public alike, for their promoters had to appeal to and utilize the law and ordinance making and taxing bodies of the State. In previous years railroad projects had been promoted with feverish and reckless haste. Counties and cities had run riot in authorizing bond issues and tax levies for railroads. Charges of corrupt practices in connection therewith were not infrequent. In 1856 extensive land grants had been given four companies to expedite the completion of projected lines. They failed to fulfill their promises. Popular expectations were sadly disappointed and public discussion was rife with demands for the annulment of the contracts and the cancellation of the grants. The dissatisfaction became so resentful that repudiation, or attempts thereat, became common and innumerable lawsuits were instituted to

<sup>1</sup>*Davenport Gazette*, cited in *The Gate City*, December 23, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Dubuque Herald*, January 11, 1860.

enforce or to enjoin the issue of bonds or the spreading and collection of tax levies in aid of railroads. In December, 1859, the Supreme Court of Iowa declared invalid a bond issue of Scott county wherein Davenport is situate.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, many communities ardently sought railroad connections and strove to secure the forfeited grants of the defaulting companies, and the holders of their stocks and bonds naturally desired to realize something from their holdings. All parties—protesting taxpayers and railroad builders—looked to the General Assembly for relief.<sup>2</sup> Rumors were soon afloat that railroad promoters expected to “send down to Des Moines this winter a strong ‘lobby’ of hired ‘constitutional lawyers’ for the purpose of operating upon the Legislature.”<sup>3</sup> Mr. J. B. Grinnell, himself an ardent promoter of railroad enterprises in those days, wrote the *St. Louis Republican*, a week or so before the General Assembly met that “the State Aid question promises to arise in Iowa at the meeting of the Legislature,” an assertion that aroused adverse suspicion and inquiries, “Who are the managers? Whose plan is to be followed?”<sup>4</sup>

With local conditions thus exceedingly difficult for political leaders either to control easily or to deal with safely, the atmosphere was made electric by sundry matters of national moment that then crowded to the fore. Iowa and Iowans were more closely connected with John Brown’s raid into Virginia and his attack on Harper’s Ferry than either law or ethics justified. The villages of Tabor and Springdale had been rendezvous for his band prior to the foray. At least three

<sup>1</sup>*Stokes v. County of Scott*, 10 Ia. Sup. Ct. Reports, 166.

<sup>2</sup>The intense feelings and subterranean currents are suggested in a series of resolutions adopted at Nevada, in Story county, at a Mass Convention of the citizens of that county, January 7th, in which the failure of the Iowa Central Air Line to complete its contract is denounced, the ability and intentions of the Dubuque, Marion and Western R. R. Co. are denied, and the Cedar Rapids and Missouri R. R. Co. is commended to the Legislature and the transfer thereto of the land grants asked. The latter road enjoyed their confidence “backed, as it is, by two powerful railroad organizations, and composed of our own citizens, in connection with eastern capitalists, who have already built, without any aid from the government, the longest line of railroad in the State.” The convention by the same resolutions “instructed” their Senator and Representative in the Legislature “to use all honorable means to secure” the desired transfer of the land grant in question. (*Daily Iowa State Journal*, January 14, 1860.)

<sup>3</sup>*Dubuque Herald*, November 20, 1859.

<sup>4</sup>The *Daily Iowa State Journal*, January 9, 1860. Mr. Grinnell was a Director of the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad (or the old M. & M. R. R., more probably) prior to 1860; at least the position he tells us, was tendered him by Mr. Henry Farnam, then President of the Company.—*Men and Events of Forty Years*, 298.

Iowans, Jeremiah Anderson, Brown's "faithful henchman,"<sup>1</sup> and the brothers, Barclay and Edwin Coppoe, took part in the raid. Soon after Brown's capture the dispatches announced that among Brown's papers were found letters of two prominent Republican leaders of Iowa, namely Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke of Iowa City, and Mr. Josiah B. Grinnell of Grinnell, the former then the reporter for the Supreme Court and the latter a state Senator; and suspicious partisans of the "Administration" charged that the correspondence was incriminating.<sup>2</sup> On December 16, 1859, the "Select Committee" of the Senate of which Senator John M. Mason of Virginia was chairman and Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was a potent member, began its inquiry into the "invasion;" and on January 5, 1860, its hearings began at Washington and some of Iowa's citizens expected summons to appear at the inquisition to tell what they knew of the "aid and comfort" given the conspirators at Tabor, Des Moines, Grinnell, Iowa City, Springdale and Davenport.<sup>3</sup> Coincident with the latter proceedings Governor John Letcher of Virginia issued (Jan. 10) a requisition on the Chief Executive of Iowa for the apprehension of Barclay Coppoe, a fugitive from justice in Virginia, the misjoinder of which two weeks later produced one of the dramatic episodes of those stirring days—explosions in the Legislature and a ringing message in rejoinder from Governor Kirkwood.

Into this highly charged atmosphere came Governor Kirkwood's inaugural address, delivered (Jan. 11) in person to the General Assembly. Three-fifths of his discourse was devoted to national issues—John Brown and Harper's Ferry, Slavery and Colonization. Brown's course the new chief magistrate of Iowa condemned "unqualifiedly," not only as "unlawful" but wrong and reprehensible and destructive of law and order. Nevertheless he at the same time roundly de-

<sup>1</sup>Frank B. Sanborn, *Recollections of Seventy Years*, I, 163.

<sup>2</sup>*The Dubuque Herald*, November 8, 1859—Correspondence from Burlington, Iowa. See also Grinnell *Ib.*, p. 218.

<sup>3</sup>*Report of The Select Committee of the Senate Appointed to Inquire into the Late Invasion and Seizure of the Public Property at Harper's Ferry*, etc., pp. 27, 28.

Mr. J. B. Grinnell attended on summons at Washington but was not called before the Committee to testify. See his *Men and Events of Forty Years*, pp. 218, 219.



nounced Presidents Pierce and Buchanan, charging that they by tortuous courses "sowed the wind" in Nebraska and Kansas, and the South was reaping the whirlwind in Virginia; on their shoulders Kirkwood laid the sole responsibility for Brown's "unlawful invasion" of the Old Dominion. As with the lightning's flash—the inaugural was followed by tremendous thunder and reverberation. The Democrats returned with furious denunciation of its sentiments. Mr. J. B. Dorr, their most influential editor pronounced its doctrines "infamous."<sup>1</sup> The Democrats of the lower house of the legislature filed a solemn formal protest against its deliverance and against its publication and distribution at public expense, declaring its statements mere dicta and grossly inappropriate as well as unwarranted, palliating lawlessness that directly assailed the integrity of the national union.<sup>2</sup> It was the violence of feeling thus created that later produced the disturbances anent Kirkwood's refusal to honor Governor Letcher's requisition for Barelay Coppoc just mentioned.

Amidst such a complex of counter currents the Legislature convened: and delegates to the special Republican state convention began to assemble in Des Moines.

Foremost in the minds of party leaders and workers was the fact that a Senator of the United States had to be elected, the term of Senator James Harlan then nearing completion. This contingency, as all familiar with state politics know, is the alpha and omega of the personal political ambitions

<sup>1</sup>*The Dubuque Herald*, January 15, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>See *Journal of House of Representatives* (8th G. A.) for dates mentioned for the Address and the Protest.

Governor Kirkwood's denunciation of Brown's conduct as hostile to good government had been antedated by another prominent Iowan on the floor of the House of Representatives at Washington. Col. Sam'l R. Curtis of Keokuk, represented the First Congressional District, comprising then the south half of Iowa. Repelling a bold innuendo that the Republicans were urging a candidate for Speaker who endorsed murder, Colonel Curtis on December 24, 1859, pronounced Brown's invasion of Virginia at Harper's Ferry "an outrage." (*Cong. Globe*, 36 Cong. 1st Ses., Vol. I-241.) Later, January 4, 1860, in the course of a colloquy with Reagan of Texas, Cobb of Alabama, and Craig of Missouri, Colonel Curtis declared Brown's previous robbery of the nine slaves from Missouri and spiriting them through Iowa "a more flagrant violation of law, and more important in its character and results than the foray which he made into Virginia." (*Ib.*, pp. 331-2.)

and finesse in American commonwealths. Then as now "King Caucus" ruled supreme. On Saturday, Sunday and Monday the lobbies of the hotels of Des Moines swarmed with political leaders and their henchmen, with legislators and candidates for offices, both great and small, with their friends and aids in attendance—all in a tremendous buzz.<sup>1</sup> Monday night (Jan. 9) party caucuses selected the clerks, doorkeepers, firemen, pages and postmaster for the Senate and the lower House. The ardent desires of the innumerable candidates for these petty offices were potentially dangerous forces when disappointed by the decisions of the caucus; for these aspirants possess power in the provinces and may influence greatly their senators and representatives in determining their course in matters of greater moment. In the election of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and in the apportionment of the chairmanships of committees and membership therein such petty considerations play no small part and the course of the Legislature on all important matters is thereby determined.

At Des Moines, as at Washington, the office of Public Printer was an alluring prize. One of Senator Harlan's strongest friends, Mr. John Teesdale, editor of *The Iowa Weekly Citizen*, had held the office since 1856. He desired a third term and deemed himself entitled to the honor. Two other influential republican editors were ambitious to secure the emoluments of the office—Messrs. James B. Howell of *The Gate City* of Keokuk and Mr. Frank W. Palmer of *The Dubuque Times*.<sup>2</sup> The fates decided in favor of the latter, and the candidacy of Senator Harlan for re-election to the National Senate had some part in the decision. From the time of his first election to that body in 1855, republican leaders in the north half

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<sup>1</sup>*Iowa City Republican*, January 11, 1860.—Editorial Correspondence from Des Moines, dated January 7th.

<sup>2</sup>There were other active or "receptive" candidates for the place mentioned besides those referred to above: Messrs. John Mahin of *The Daily Muscatine Journal*, G. H. Jerome of *The Iowa City Republican*, J. G. Davenport of *The Times of Cedar Rapids*, and Alfred Sanders of *The Daily Davenport Gazette*. (Capitol Corr. of *The Gate City*, January 11, 1860, and *The Daily Iowa State Journal*, January 10, 1860.) Mr. Mahin apparently did not desire the office seriously for he states that Mr. Teesdale's "most prominent competitor" was Mr. Howell of *The Gate City*, "the oldest and most efficient newspaper conductor in the state." (Capitol Corr. in *Daily Muscatine Journal*, January 11, 1860.)

of the State had demanded a like honor for one of their leaders, and had constantly fanned local prejudices with that end in view. Party leaders at Dubuque were foremost in urging the election of a northern man. Despite their powerful pressure Governor James W. Grimes, a near neighbor of Mr. Harlan, was elected as his colleague in 1858; not a few of the senior Senator's friends realized the danger in the latter fact. To counterbalance it, political prizes of lesser value went to the north half of the State. This consideration was in mind in the nomination of Mr. Kirkwood for Governor in 1859.<sup>1</sup> In 1860 Dubuque had aspirants for senatorial honors who only needed a favorable slant of the beam to induce their announcement. A correspondent of *The Gate City*, writing from Des Moines, Dec. 26, 1859, significantly observes: "The Senatorial question seems superficially to excite but little attention here just now; but the portents of the times are that the vexed question of locality will be exhumed for the benefit of solicitous competitors."<sup>2</sup>

Appreciating the situation, Mr. Palmer became a candidate for State Printer. In the contest Senator Harlan's managers could not prudently promote the chances of either Mr. Teesdale or Mr. Howell, without arousing the resentment of the "North-state" partisans favoring Mr. Palmer. On the other hand neutrality is no less a rock of offense in politics—for those adversely affected are wont to suspect that it signifies either indifference or timidity, deadly offenses in the code of lay politicians—those who seek to attain or to hold high office and power must make return in kind to those humbler personages whose co-operation and votes are essential to their elevation and continuance in power. Somewhat of the importance and heat of the contest may be inferred from the reports of two observers. Another correspondent of *The Gate City*, "R" wrote January 6th that, "It is now thought that

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<sup>1</sup>Numbers of letters to Senator Harlan from 1858 to 1860 emphasize the considerations referred to above. *Autobiographical MSS.*

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, December 31, 1859. The Correspondent signs himself "J. M. D."—probably the late J. M. Delaplaine at that time on the staff of *The Gate City*.

the great fight of the session will be about the State Printing."<sup>1</sup> Four days later when the caucus had been called for the nomination of the State Printer and the National Senator, Mr. Porter states: "The race for State Printer has become about as exciting as the competition for the post of would-be U. S. Senator."<sup>2</sup> Those familiar with maneuvers in party caucuses will appreciate the significance and the masterly tactics of Senator Harlan's friends in assenting to the postponement of the decision on the matter of the State Printer until January 24th. The cast of the votes when taken gave Mr. Palmer the prize.

In sundry perplexities of this sort and in the highly unstable conditions outlined, we may well suspect that there was more truth than partisan presumption and persiflage in the assertions of Mr. Will Porter, the Democratic editor of *The State Journal* at Des Moines. He declared that Mr. Harlan's friends were "anxious and uneasy;" that "they were afraid of delay and hence they forced hasty action;"<sup>3</sup> that there was much suppressed feeling and some "strong expressions of indignation;" that the Democrats asked for a reasonable delay but it was summarily denied. This urgency he asserts was due to the fact that a "particular friend of Senator Harlan, who has for several years held a position in the Senate received letters from prominent friends and perhaps from the Senator himself, urging an immediate caucus and speedy re-election—their purport was: 'delays are dangerous.' " In the course of his comments Mr. Porter throws out a suggestion that although tinged with ironical concern for an unbiased expression of the general sentiments of Republicans on the senatorship, no doubt reflected much of the current comment in the hotel lobbies:

The question is, why this haste? The Republican party have a clear and positive majority, which could not be affected by any of the ordinary casualties to which Legislators are subject. Next Wednesday, the 18th, the Republican State Convention comes off, which will be fresh from the people of that party throughout the State. They might have given to the various Republican Senators

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.*, January 11, 1860. "R" was probably Mr. Wm. Richards, then Business Manager of *The Gate City*.

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily Iowa State Journal*, January 10, 1860.

<sup>3</sup>*Ib.*, January 14, 1860.

and Representatives some counsels direct and healthy from their constituents, as to the general wishes of the party throughout the State, uncorrupted by any machinations so rife at the Capitol.....

In this re-election the Republican organization has been shaken to its foundation.<sup>1</sup>

Shrewd as were some of the political leaders foremost in the Republican party of Iowa in 1859-1860, it would be strange indeed if there were not senatorial politics in the fringes of the decision fixing the date of the special state convention to select the delegates to the national Republican convention to nominate their candidate for President. The conditions on the eve of the assembly of the delegates certainly afforded a situation for a free-for-all contest if by some disturbance the dogs of factions had been set upon each other.

(b) Sundry Editorial Expressions.

The near approach of the special convention to select the delegates to go to the national Republican convention elicited no more editorial expressions in the party press of the State respecting its work or the wisdom of various modes of procedure than did the call for the convention in the forepart of December. One finds no advice, no comment in the columns of Messrs. Aldrich, Drummond, Dunham, Howell, Jerome, Junkin, Mahin, Norris, Rich, Sanders and Teesdale. One must look sharply to discover even in their columns devoted to local news any mention of the caucuses or county conventions that selected the county delegates to attend at Des Moines. Such lack of expression did not necessarily imply indifference respecting the presidential contest or languid interest on the part of their readers. It may have been due to wise discretion and prudence. The attendance at the convention demonstrated that public or party interest was not dormant or halting. Two influential editors express their feelings—each in different ways and their observations are worth noting.

<sup>1</sup>*Ib.*, January 16, 1860.

So far as the writer can discover Mr. A. J. Stevens, a banker of Des Moines, then the member of the national Republican committee for Iowa was the only candidate for Senator Harlan's place publicly mentioned (Capitol Corr., *Muscatine Journal*, January 11, 1860). Mr. Harlan's friends sent him many letters informing him of talk of the candidacy of Messrs. Jacob Butler of Muscatine, John A. Kasson, and George G. Wright of Des Moines, and of Fitz Henry Warren of Burlington. *Autobiographical MSS.*, pp. 3185-3583.



We have already seen the cautious, conservative comments of Mr. Henry P. Scholte of *The Pella Gazette* when the call for the convention was first published. On January 4th, referring generally to the work of the national convention he says particularly of candidates for its nomination: "We have certainly our personal preferences; but we have abstained to forestall our state and national conventions. Should our state convention deem it necessary to instruct our delegates for whom to give their first vote, well and good; but should that convention deem it better to give no decisive instructions in that regard, we shall, with good humor, sustain the men who shall be designated. . . ." The sentiment which Mr. Scholte expressed reiterates the views of the majority of the experienced editors of the State, put forth in their columns in 1859. Party government, like government at large, in a republic like ours is posited upon responsible leadership. The masses, or the constituents indicate their general desire and will in the large but seldom undertake to direct specifically as to the modes of realization either in respect of men or measures. To their leaders in council they delegate the power to decide, believing that a few selectmen free to act as conditions make expedient, will insure better counsels and wiser decisions than many men of many minds acting indiscriminately and ill-advisedly.

One hundred miles north of Pella, at Charles City in Floyd county, not far south of the Minnesota line, a new note was sounded—struck by one, too, who previously had been cautious and conservative in expression and suggestion. Mr. Hildreth in the forepart of 1859, indicated a favorable attitude towards the candidacy of Judge Bates, and an adverse disposition towards that of Senator Seward, for the reason largely that the latter was so generally proclaimed a radical, and reckless extremist upon the subject of Slavery. A decided change in the temperature and drift of public discussion followed John Brown's raid and the publication of Helper's *Impending Crisis*. The leaders of the South were infuriated and their denunciation of the abettors and comforters of Brown and Helper was bitter and seathing. Accusations of

conspiracy, "lawlessness" and treason hurtled through the council chambers at Washington—not vague hints and sly innuendo but personal mention, bald, direct, brutal. The members of the major party of the North were called indiscriminately "Abolitionists," a term of utter contempt in the mouths of Southerners and so considered by Northerners. The heaviest, sharpest missiles of the speeches of the Slavocrats were aimed at one man on whose shoulders they laid the responsibility for Abolitionism, which was manifest to them in "nigger stealing," underground railways, open defiance of the Fugitive Slave law, all of which had its fruition in John Brown, whose execution for high treason, flagrant and undenied, was publicly mourned in the North. That man they deemed the spokesman of the North and the protagonists of the South declared with but little reserve, that disunion by secession would ensue if he should be made President. The change and concentration in political discussion produced a revulsion of feeling in Mr. Hildreth and a decision not infrequent in strong natures normally inclined to conservative courses when long subject to direct and increasing malevolence. Considerateness in conduct, caution, grace and patience under such circumstances, are taken by the provoking party as evidence of weakness or as the shifts and finesse of hostile design. While with the one provoked, patience ceases to be a virtue, caution seems ill-advised, and he suddenly takes up the gauntlet thrown at his feet, for a fight seems demanded and a fight he will give and squarely on the main issue. Mr. Hildreth, exasperated beyond endurance, gave expression on January 12th to his intense feelings in an editorial that is instructive for more than one reason and it is given at length. Its declarations will indicate with decisive clearness the high voltage of the electricity with which the atmosphere of political debate in Iowa was surcharged, when the chiefs of the clans of the Republican party first met in 1860 to decide upon their course in the Chicago convention

We notice that some of the papers in the Southern part of the State, are out in favor of Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, as a Republican candidate for the Presidency. That Cameron is an as-

piring man we have known for a long time, and we have no doubt that he and his agents are busy in "fixing the flints" of the Western press—in other words, moulding a Western public opinion in his favor. But, gentlemen, Editors of Iowa, this will not do. The antecedents of Simon Cameron are not satisfactory. Such times as these demand a *representative* man for a Presidential candidate of the Republican party. The doctrine of *availability* has been practiced upon by both the great leading political parties, until the nation, both in character and finance, has been brought upon the brink of ruin.

We believe that the Republicans will be able to elect whoever they may nominate for President. Then throw aside "availability" and give us a *positive* man—one whose history and principles are well known and are thoroughly tried—a man who may be fully regarded as the *embodiment* of the principles and the measures of the party. That man is unquestionably William H. Seward.

Does the reader ask our reasons for this opinion—we answer: The slavery propagandists—now the Democratic party—have made the selection for us. It is around Seward's unoffending head that all their wrath is concentrated. So much do they hate and fear him that they are continually threatening a dissolution of the Union should Republicans *dare* to exercise their rights under the Constitution and elect him for President.

Our former predilections were for Edward Bates of Missouri, as a Western man and a man representing our sentiments. Our "available" man was John C. Fremont, a man who will draw more votes than any other one the Republicans can put in nomination. But our *positive* man is William H. Seward, and believing that the Republicans can elect any man they may nominate, we go for Seward, heart and soul.

Six months ago it was difficult to tell who would or who should be the Republican candidate for President, but not so now. As said before, the Southern press and Southern leaders have made proclamations—and indeed it is their one continual howl—that if the free-men of the North dare to disregard their impudent dictation, and elect to the Presidency, William H. Seward, they will secede from or destroy the Union, and smash up things generally. In our opinion this settles the question for us.

Thus threatened and bullied, men who never preferred Seward to other well-known and long-tried Republicans for the Presidency, have now but one fixed and unalterable determination in regard to who shall be their Standard-Bearer in 1860. They intend to prove that they not only clearly understand their constitutional rights and privileges, but that they have the necessary nerve to maintain them. They will not threaten or bully or play the braggadocio. All that they leave to the men who quailed before old John

Brown and his seventeen miserable Abolitionists, and who have been marching troops up and down the country to frighten away the shadow of a danger which had no substance, save in their cowardly apprehensions, and the absence of all self-reliance in the hour of danger. They intend to vindicate their self-respect, to show their estimate of bullying threats, by electing to the Presidency the very man the South would ostracize. They will then leave to him and his co-administrators of the Government the punishment of treason whenever and wherever it dares to exhibit itself. And they have no fears for the result. Barking dogs rarely bite; and when they do, are certain to be punished for having mistaken their vocation.

We can tell our pro-slavery friends, and they had better believe it, that if any portion of this great confederacy whether it be the East or the West, the North or the South, attempts to withdraw from the Union, they will be promptly *whipped*—aye, *whipped* into subjection. It is all idle to mince the matter. The fiat has gone forth and will be enforced; let Washington, Oregon and California, at the Northwest, or Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts, at the Northeast or the Agricultural States of the North and Center, or the slave States of the South and the Southwest—let any one of them or any combination of them raise the banner of rebellion against the American Union—we care not what their pretence for treason—as certainly as there is a God above, so certain is it, that the offending States, will be *whipped* into obedience, and the traitors who encouraged rebellion, terminate their career upon the gallows.<sup>1</sup>

Sundry facts in connection with the foregoing editorial may well be noted before passing on to later phases. In the first place its significance is enhanced when we consider that the writer was not a Harry Hotspur as was Mr. Thomas Drummond of *The Eagle* of Vinton, nor a radical of the type of Mr. John Mahin of *The Journal* of Muscatine. He was a cool, deliberate “down east” Yankee who had had twenty years of experience as an editor in Vermont and Massachusetts. Further, at the time he wrote the lines, he was a member of the most potent body in the state government of Iowa, the Board of Education, that under a special clause of the constitution had plenary powers of legislation, supervision, control and adjudication in the finance and administration of the entire educational system of the State, of the common, secondary and the highest state schools.

<sup>1</sup>*St. Charles Intelligencer*, Jan. 12, 1860.

Mr. Hildreth, it is clear, looked upon the movement for the nomination of Senator Cameron of Pennsylvania with some concern, evidently considering it to be gathering decided headway. He, no less than other editors who have been quoted, appreciated the strategic importance of securing the electoral vote of the Keystone state. But considerations of expediency lumped together under the catch word "availability" were not sufficient to warrant the nomination of the Pennsylvanian at Chicago. He was a shrewd and successful politician, an artful and skilled tactician in the organization and direction of party workers in political campaigns and field maneuvers, in the working and control of the "machine" as we put it nowadays. But neither his character nor his career symbolized the dominant opinion, or, perhaps better, the determining opinion on the major issue uppermost in the public mind—to-wit, Slavery. On this issue the entire public was intensely alive. Its consideration could neither be avoided nor hedged against by party leaders, much as they might wish to do so; and their candidate for the Presidency must needs be satisfactory to the mass of the Republicans in the reliable states as well as to those in the doubtful states. Senator Cameron, whether justly or not, had a reputation that made voters concerned only with the evils of public life, and not at all with the game and methods of politics, extremely suspicious; and however agreeable he might be to the politicians of Pennsylvania, his nomination at Chicago would neither secure the faith nor arouse the enthusiasm of Republicans, let alone win new adherents to the party's standards.

The most striking facts in Mr. Hildreth's editorials are his acceptance of the threats of Secession by the Southern Fire-eaters as deliberate and serious, and his definite and solemn defiance to the promoters of Disunion. Secession had been the bogie of political discussion for many years. In the Fremont campaign in 1856 threats of Disunion were boldly and freely made, but at the North they were generally discounted and ridiculed as "idle talk" and "silly nonsense."<sup>1</sup> The *emcute* at Harper's Ferry and Helper's *Impending Crisis*,

<sup>1</sup>Von Holst, *Constitutional and Political History of the United States*, V, 247-251.



and the deadlock over the Speakership in Congress, caused a renewal of such threats. "The Capitol resounds with the cries of dissolution," wrote Senator Grimes to Mrs. Grimes, "and the cry is echoed throughout the city."<sup>1</sup> But again the leaders and the press of the Republican party regarded, or at least proclaimed the seditious utterances as partisan tricks—"a game for the Presidency" wrote Thurlow Weed; "an audacious humbug," declared Greeley's *Tribune*;<sup>2</sup> and Senator Grimes deemed them designed "simply to coerce, to frighten the Republicans."<sup>3</sup> Throughout 1860 Republicans commonly derided the minatory language of Southerners, although Mr. Rhodes gives us grounds for his suggestion that their scoffing was mainly for party purposes.<sup>4</sup> A fact significant of this conclusion—although by no means necessarily so—was the general contempt heaped upon the participants in the "Union-saving Meetings" and programs promoted during the period here considered. The Republican editors of Iowa, as in the older states to the east, regarded such proceedings as nefarious and designed to weaken the strength of their party.<sup>5</sup> The utter unpreparedness of the North for the catastrophe when the storm broke in 1861, and the tremendous shock and rebound universally witnessed, indicates pretty conclusively that Mr. Hildreth's serious consideration of the "strong talk" of the Slavocrats was not common. How common Mr. Hildreth's feelings were in Iowa at that time we can not now determine; but we have already noted the defiance of another cool conservative editor, Mr. Howell. In June, 1858, to the treasonable declarations of *The Crescent* of New Orleans, he replied, "all such fanatics as *The Crescent* . . . will be driven like dogs to their kennels or hung by

<sup>1</sup>Salter's *Life of Jas. W. Grimes*, 121.

<sup>2</sup>Von Holst, *ib.*, VII, 230-240. <sup>3</sup>Salter, *ib.*, 122.

<sup>4</sup>Rhodes, *History of the United States*, II, 488.

<sup>5</sup>*The Daily Muscatine Journal*, December 28, 1859. See editorial on "The Union Saving Farce."

the wayside as a warning to traitors," should they attempt secession on the election of a Republican President.<sup>1</sup>

Normally we should expect to find vigorous language of this sort in the columns of Mr. John Mahin's *Journal* at Muscatine, but for the most part he was silent, at least so far as extended slashing editorials go. On January 12th, in contrasting the character of Charleston and Chicago as convention cities and the spirit and purposes of the men who would assemble in them to represent the two great parties to decide on their national platforms and candidates. Mr. Mahin uses some firm language:

... all the loud and excited talk of the fire eaters, and the whining of the dirt eaters—the two classes which compose the Democratic party will have no other effect than to strengthen their determination [of the Republicans] to take the administration of the affairs of the country out of the hands of the unscrupulous demagogues who are now at the helm. The Republican party holds that slavery should be restricted to its present limits, and upon this issue it will receive the hearty support of a large class at the South, who believe that slavery operates against the welfare of the States in which it at present exists. Republicans are determined to preserve the Union against the threats and acts of disunionists everywhere; and, as we said, the convention at Chicago will bind together in an invincible phalanx, good and true men, at the North and South, for the election of a president upon these grounds. Abuses, of course, will be heaped upon the party by the "Democratic" press and "Democratic" orators, but the people cannot be deceived by any such stuff. They have not forgotten that the fathers of the Republic occupied the identical position upon the Slavery question that the Republican party now occupies and their decision at the ballot box in November, will be their answer to the "Democratic" argument of the campaign, from which, if not satisfactory to them, they cannot appeal.

Mr. Howell of *The Gate City* had no advice to offer the delegates to the state convention, but on January 11th he placed before his readers the name of a candidate for the presidential nomination not heretofore mentioned, but not a name unknown. As was his wont he did so "without prejudice," being completely non-committal as to his own feelings for or against the candidate and his consideration. He said:

<sup>1</sup>*The Gate City*, June 30, 1858.

Mr. Howell, reciting similar threats in the presidential campaign of 1828, in the event of the election of J. Q. Adams, and again during the speakership contest when N. P. Banks was a candidate, observed on the current threats: "The Disunion game is an old game. It is played on purpose to 'gull the flats' and so long as the 'flats' exist they expect to be successful. Whether the game is played out or not is a thing to be proved." (*The Gate City*, December 26, 1859.) Two weeks later he reproves Democratic editors for not denouncing the suggestion that Disunion would be beneficial to the South. (*Ib.*, January 9, 1860.)

The friends of Mr. Dayton have issued a circular to promote his nomination to the Presidency. They say that full conferences have established the fact that he would receive the vote of the united opposition in New Jersey and be certain to carry the State; and they feel confident that the same elements of popularity, the same antecedents and the same general state of things politically in Pennsylvania that prevail in New Jersey would enable him to carry that state.

Mr. Dunham's comment in *The Hawk-Eye* (Jan. 10th) on the claim of Mr. Dayton's promoters that his popularity in New Jersey and Pennsylvania would carry those states for the Republicans was somewhat critical: " . . . the fact that he failed to do so as a candidate for Vice-President in 1856 is not satisfactorily reconciled with this assumption. Mr. Dayton is an eminently conservative man with Whig antecedents and would make a good president if elected." Such comment indicates adverse inclinations but it is so cushioned with commendation that the critic is not embarrassed if the fates decide in the candidate's favor.

The writer has discovered but one editorial specifically urging the nomination of a particular candidate in the fore part of January. Mr. Orlando McCraney, editor of *The Weekly McGregor Press*, declared himself again in favor of the nomination of Judge Bates. A portion of his editorial succeeds:

The time is now drawing near when the candidates of the different parties and interests for their responsible positions are to be brought forward. The political sentiment of the country never before was in so unsettled a condition as today, and but few men in the North at least, are prepared to pledge fidelity to any particular party. The conservative Republican element, we think, will predominate, and the opposition will fall into line.....

We are but one of the millions interested in this great political movement, yet we claim the right to be heard. Our vote and our influence will be extended in behalf of the nomination of Edward Bates of Missouri, as the candidate of the people, believing, as we do, that he is not only one of the best, most talented, able and liberal men of the day, but that he is a man who is closely identified with the interest of our portion of the Union. That he will be the friend of the pioneer—that he will exert his influence in opening to commerce our vast west, and giving life and zeal to emigration.

Edward Bates is also our choice on account of availability. We regard him as one of the most popular men of the day and acceptable alike to the North and South, East and West. He has been called forward not by a life spent in demagogism but by his fellow countrymen, and if the honors and responsibilities of that office are conferred upon him, it will be unasked for and unsolicited by him. He will come into office untrammelled by fealty to party or persons. He will be free to act according to the convictions of his own mind and will make the people an able and worthy president.

Mr. Dunham reprints the foregoing without comment.<sup>1</sup>

The significance of surface phenomena in the currents of politics is always difficult to apprehend; just as it is difficult to perceive the purport of eddies and swirls in the currents of our rivers. The following extract from a letter written to *The Gate City* and dated at New York City, Jan. 7, 1860, is not without interest:

At a social meeting, by invitation, at a private house, one evening this week, where some twenty republicans of the city were present, together with General Pomeroy of Kansas, Gen. Reid, Mayor Leighton, Wm. S. McGavie, D. W. Kilbourne, of Keokuk, Attorney-General Rice of Oskaloosa, and Jacob Butler, Esq., of Muscatine, there was a decided preference expressed by most of [the] party (except the Iowa gentleman) for Chase of Ohio. Seward, Chase, Bates, Cameron, and Wade seem to be the most prominent at the present time.<sup>2</sup>

The adverse attitude of so many different Iowans from widely separate sections of the southern half of the State towards the candidacy of Gov. Chase is suggestive. All of the men mentioned were ardent Republicans. Mr. Butler, in particular, was an Abolitionist of a pronounced type. Gov. Chase's record as an anti-slavery man could not be gainsaid except by extremists of the most violent sort. Such disinclination in respect of his nomination must have signified a common belief that he could not be elected if nominated.

(c) Some of the County Preliminaries.

The local preliminaries incident to the selection of the delegates to attend the state convention at Des Moines aroused but little public interest if we should conclude from the reports

<sup>1</sup>*The Hawk-Eye* (wk.), Jan. 21, 1860.  
<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, Jan. 18, 1860.

thereof in the party press of the State. One experiences difficulty in discovering calls or notices of local caucuses or primaries or county conventions. There is little space given to their proceedings; and almost no comment thereon. A few details are discoverable, some of which are instructive, for they suggest the major currents that were constantly running beneath the surface.

The selection of the delegates for Dubuque county elicited a brief note in *The Dubuque Herald*. Among the delegates chosen were Judge W. W. Hamilton, Wm. B. Allison and D. N. Cooley. Two other names, Messrs. Francis Mangold and H. W. Richter, suggest the "recognition" of the German-American element in that community<sup>1</sup>. At Davenport the party leaders were careful to attend to the nativity of the delegates, if we may believe the classification of *The Davenport Democrat*. Of the twelve delegates—five were *Germans*, N. J. Rusch, G. G. Arndt, L. Schrieker, H. Ramming, and H. L. Lischer; three were *Irishmen*, James Quinn, B. F. Guy and Alfred Sanders; and four were *Americans*, John W. Thompson, Wm. Henry Fitzhugh Gurley, Geo. W. Ells, and Chas. Foster. To some sarcastic suggestion of *The Democrat*, the "administration" organ at Davenport, anent the nationalities Mr. Mahin at Muscatine, retorted: "Well, what of it, Mr. Democrat? Are you such an out-and-out Know-Nothing as to complain because eight of these delegates are foreigners and only five are natives?"<sup>2</sup> Farther down the river at Burlington the delegates were chosen apparently without fuss. Two names—Messrs. C. W. Bodeman and T. B. Webber—again indicate that sons of Germania were numerous enough to be reckoned with and hence were entitled to representation in the party's councils. Three state notables appear in the lists—Mr. Chas. Ben Darwin, chairman of the Code Commission that was then about to submit its draft of the Code of 1860 to the Legislature, Judge L. D. Stockton, then one of the Justices of the Supreme Court of Iowa, and Mr. Fitz Henry Warren, of whom more later. The convention or the "meeting" voted that the "Central committee [of Des

<sup>1</sup>*The Dubuque Herald*, December 29, 1859.

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily Muscatine Journal*, January 6, 1860.



Moines county?] fill the vacancies in the delegation should any occur."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Dunham makes no editorial reference in *The Hawk-Eye* to the convention, nor to the delegates nor to the approaching state convention. The state convention seems to have had no special interest to the editors of *The Gate City*. Mr. Howell was chairman of the county central committee and issued (Dec. 16) the call for the county convention to assemble at Charleston, in Lee county (Dec. 31); but although he and his business manager were generally interested in the final result one finds no reference to the proceedings. In Wapello county, and in Ottumwa the convention took no action that attracted special interest except to specify by resolution as to the manner of casting the vote if some of the delegates should fail to attend at Des Moines.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Teesdale's paper related the proceedings of the convention of Polk county in two inches of space.<sup>3</sup>

We have already seen that the Republicans of Fremont county instructed their delegates to Des Moines to work for the nomination of Justice John McLean for President and Judge Edward Bates for Vice-President.<sup>4</sup> And that the local caucus at Newton directed their representatives in the county convention of Jasper county to seek to secure the nomination of Salmon P. Chase and of Abraham Lincoln for first and second places on the national ticket.<sup>5</sup> Whether any like action was taken or opposed at the ensuing convention the writer can not say. The Republicans of Black Hawk county apparently were composed of some lusty radicals for they directed their delegates "to use their influence at the state convention for delegates to the national convention who are in favor of the nomination of Wm. H. Seward or Charles Sumner as the Republican candidate for President."<sup>6</sup> Instructions such as these make ardent partisans and insistent promoters of candidates groan in spirit and, if they dare, indulge in strong language.

<sup>1</sup>*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, January 2, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*The Weekly Ottumwa Courier*, January 5, 1860.

<sup>3</sup>*Daily State Register*, January 9, 1860.

<sup>4</sup>*Ib.*, January 13, 1860.

<sup>5</sup>*The Gate City*, January 11, 1860.

<sup>6</sup>*The Black Hawk Courier*, January 3, 1860.

Here and there the waters surged up vigorously and white caps were observable. The turmoil at Washington had its reaction in some of the county conventions. The Republicans of Grundy county felt strongly and gave expression to their feelings upon the course of affairs at the national capital. Their resolutions were pointed and pithy:

Resolved, That the Republicans of Grundy county approve of the determined stand our Representatives in Congress have taken in the election of Speaker, believing as we do, that those who recommend Helper's Book are safer men than avowed disunionists.

Resolved, That we are in favor of the Union, inasmuch as we have prospered under it, and as we see no good cause for abandoning it, we will stay in it, and we will make all others stay in it, or do as General Jackson would have done, hang all who attempt to get out of it.<sup>1</sup>

The names of only two Iowans appeared among the endorsers of Helper's book, Mr. Timothy Davis of Dubuque, Congressman from Iowa from 1857-59, and Col. S. R. Curtis, then in Congress.<sup>2</sup> The Republican central committee of Muscatine county deemed the urgency of public questions so great that they made special mention of the fact when they published (Dec. 8) their "request" of the Republicans to meet in "Mass Convention" on January 7th, at the county courthouse; thus concluding:

We respectfully suggest that there be on this occasion a general attendance from all parts of the county, to give an authoritative expression to the sentiments of the Republicans of this county upon the exciting questions now agitating the country, and of their preferences as to the manner of conducting the coming campaign.

The chairman of the committee signing the foregoing was Mr. Hugh J. Campbell, who was then manifesting the energy and decisiveness of character that made his subsequent career influential in Louisiana and the Dakotas.<sup>3</sup> The convention

<sup>1</sup>*The Daily State Register*, February 2, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*Cong. Globe*, 31 Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. I-16.

<sup>3</sup>He became a Brigadier-General by brevet on being mustered out of the Union army at the close of the war. Later he was appointed federal judge in Louisiana. While in that State he achieved fame or infamy as a member of the election board in the electoral contest in 1876-77. He gave his decision in favor of the Republican presidential electors, thereby insuring the election of President Hayes. Afterwards he moved to the Territory of Dakota where he served for years as District Attorney. His activities on behalf of statehood for the present Dakotas gained him the sobriquet of "Father of Statehood." *Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography*, VII, 47.

occurred as scheduled with a number of prominent party chiefs in attendance. Judge George Meason presided. Mr. Geo. H. Van Horne was made Secretary. Later he was appointed Consul at Marseilles by President Lincoln, and had a creditable career as a journalist, lecturer and writer. The convention transacted its main business apparently without friction, choosing an exceptionally strong delegation, eight in number, to attend at Des Moines. Among the delegates was Mr. D. C. Clond, Iowa's first Attorney-General (1853-1856). The course of the Democratic party in Kansas forced him to abandon that party. He was later the author of several books of considerable local currency.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Snel Foster, a noted pioneer horticulturist to whom chief credit is given for creating the demand that led to the establishing of the Agricultural College at Ames<sup>2</sup> was a delegate, as were Mr. Jacob Butler, Mr. John Mahin and Mr. Henry O'Connor. The meeting discussed at some length methods for "more effective organization" in conducting the campaign. A committee was appointed, consisting of L. H. Washburn, Jerome Carskadden and Hugh J. Campbell. The minutes subsequently report that "on motion of Hugh J. Campbell, Esq., the work entitled 'Helper's Impending Crisis' is recommended by this committee as a book worthy of an extensive circulation in this county." Whereupon the convention adjourned.

The recommendation of Helper's book made Mr. D. S. Biles, editor of *The Democratic Enquirer* of Muscatine, fulminate mightily. The resolution of the convention, together with sundry extracts of striking passages from the *Impending Crisis* were reprinted by him, under the caption in bold black type "The Republican Platform." He reproduced a half column or more thereof in nearly every issue from Jan. 12 to Feb. 23. He made the action of the Republicans of Muscatine notorious and aroused no little public interest, for a special correspondent of *The New York Herald*, then travel-

<sup>1</sup>Gue, *History of Iowa*, IV, 55. His chief books were *The War Powers of the President and Monopolies and the People*.

<sup>2</sup>*Ib.*, IV, 94, 95.

ing in the Northwest, devoted considerable space to the fact as indicative of the overwhelming abolition sentiment among the Republicans of Iowa; he declared it to be the first public endorsement of the book anywhere in the North.<sup>1</sup>

(d) Senator Harlan's Confidential Advices.

The public utterances of political leaders and their confidential expressions *inter se* are not always coincident. Such divergences as we may discern are seldom due to moral delinquency but to the fact that in public, politicians assert what they hope for in the large, and are striving to bring to pass, or express what they deem most prudent and effective for their purposes. In the confidences of personal interviews or correspondence, however, they exhibit their hopes and fears, their desires and plans, frankly and freely—or at least more so. Subjects as to which they maintain a severe silence in their editorial columns or on the platform, they deal with plumply within the family circle. Thus it was in the preliminaries of the presidential campaign in 1860 in Iowa. The major currents of opinion among Republicans on both issues and candidates were not clearly discernable on the surface, when the party chiefs convened at Des Moines to make their first decision as to their course in the contest. The expressions of editors were rare and in general terms when ventured; but the conclusion does not follow that party chiefs and local leaders were not keenly interested and alive to the momentous matters then in the balances.

In state politics there are, as already intimated, two chief centers that receive the voluminous currents of party advices. The substance of advices, information and appeals, return in cautious inquiry and deft suggestion, sometimes in direct and urgent decisions. These centers are the State's national senators. These party chiefs correlate local and national opinion. Their views are the issue of currents constantly flowing into Washington from their constituents, modified by their appreciation of advices received from their associates in Wash-

<sup>1</sup>N. Y. *Herald*, February 19, 1860. The comments referred to were quoted by the writer, *ANNALS*, VIII, 194.

ington from other states. We have already seen the letter of Senator Grimes to Governor-elect Kirkwood, written December 26, 1859. As Iowa's junior Senator was in constant correspondence with his constituents his advice was doubtless in part a reflection of his local advices. Unfortunately the contents of his letter files seem to be irrecoverably lost.<sup>1</sup> Senator Harlan's correspondence, however, has been preserved and it affords us interesting evidence of the drifts and shifts of local opinion in Iowa during the period here under consideration. Sundry portions of the correspondence are given in what follows.

Col. Alvin Saunders of Mt. Pleasant was Senator Harlan's *fidus Achates* and his major-general in his senatorial campaigns. From Springfield, Ill., once his home<sup>2</sup> where he was visiting he wrote (Nov. 8), relative to the presidential contest approaching: "If we succeed then we are all O. K., but if we fail then our cake is dough for at least a long time." James F. Wilson of Fairfield wrote (Dec. 19), "The threats of disunion now so boldly made sit heavily on the Democracy of the Northwest. . . . The cry raised over Helper's book is doing more towards its circulation than all the Republican committees could have done in years. Everybody wants to read its awful contents." Dr. Charles S. Clarke, a prominent physician of Fairfield (Dec. 22): . . . "I am as you well know an earnest Republican. I would not interfere with slavery in the states. I never did sympathize or act with the Abolition party and yet down South they would call me an Abolitionist."<sup>3</sup> I know the Republican leaders of Iowa and elsewhere and I know that they are Union Republicans and are opposed to disunion Democrats and Abolitionists. Republicans in Iowa all condemn Brown's rash act but they do admire his bravery, truthfulness and fidelity to what he conscientiously deemed right."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Senator Grimes' correspondence with the exception of a few letters was destroyed by the Executor of his estate by direction of Mrs. Grimes.—Miss Mary D. Nealley to the writer, Sept. 20, 1909.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel Saunder's brother, Pressley, was a member of Abraham Lincoln's regiment in the Black Hawk War.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Clarke lived for some time in Kentucky.

<sup>4</sup>In a letter to Senator H., October 30th, Dr. Clarke said: "No good citizen justifies Brown, no good citizen excuses Pierce, Buchanan & Co. On them this evil rests."



Not all of Senator Harlan's correspondents discussed affairs at large; some wished to promote the general welfare by his advancement: thus Mr. J. B. Young, a leading attorney of Marion, in Linn county, expressed a hope (Dec. 27) "I would rejoice to see my old friend . . . the candidate for Vice-President," a wish that was later declared publicly by another friend in an adjoining county.

Another attorney, Mr. J. F. Brown of Eldora in Hardin county, communicated his views upon the presidential question (Dec. 28): "I hope that W. H. Seward will be nominated *if he can be elected*. He above all others is my Man." The Secretary of State, Mr. Elijah Sells, notified him (Dec. 29) that the "Third House" of the General Assembly and the Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad Company were "conspiring" to secure a diversion of the land grant to the Iowa Central Air line to a new company. Mr. John W. Rankin, the state senator from Lee county, the law partner of Samuel F. Miller, wrote him (Jan. 14, 1860): "Give my best wishes to Gov. Grimes, also to Gen. Cameron, the next President of the United States. This is no prophecy, but the truth ahead of time." On the same date Mr. Robert Gower of Gower's Ferry, in Cedar county, gave him a report of local opinion on the presidential succession and expressed his own views as to a desirable nominee:

People are beginning to discuss the subject of our next President. I expect our State by their convention on the 18th inst. will decide their preference for Republican nominee. I have heard urged by delegates to that convention, General Cameron, General Fessenden and Judge McLean. Before the 13th of June I would be glad of your choice.

The expressions which succeed are taken from two letters written in Des Moines on the eve of the state convention, by delegates thereto. Both writers had state wide reputations and influence. The first was a brilliant orator and effective campaigner. The second was an experienced party worker, alert and shrewd, who had been a close observer of political conditions in southern sections of the State from the time Iowa

was a part of the territory of Wisconsin. Mr. Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, on January 15th wrote Senator Harlan of presidential politics as follows:

. . . Our convention which meets next Wednesday will be largely attended and we anticipate a good time. Everybody is a candidate for delegate to the Chicago Convention so that we will be at no loss for timber. I am entirely indifferent providing they will only send a delegation that will comport with the dignified and decided Republican character of Iowa. I think Iowa may be set down now as decidedly Republican in sentiment and action. There is a good deal of talk and speculation about Presidential candidates, one element which seems to be entering into this coming Presidential contest already, I never liked and like it now less than ever, that is the *availability* element. It's a sheer humbug. We as a party have strength enough if we only have integrity, we can and ought to select our best man, the representative man of our party. I have but one candidate myself, although I expect to vote and work for whoever is nominated. If my vote could make a president today it would be given to Wm. H. Seward in preference to any man now living. I believe he can be—I know he ought to be President.

The next day (Jan. 16) Mr. Hawkins Taylor of Keokuk communicated his observations on the same subject:

. . . Our State Convention comes off Wednesday for the appointment of delegates to the Chicago Convention. There is a good many candidates for delegates. Who will be appointed it is hard to tell now. I am in favor of the appointment of two to each Judicial district and then let them cast the vote the state is entitled to which ought to be 16 or 18. There is no disposition to instruct our delegates, still I think that the general feeling is in favor of Cameron and Lincoln or Lincoln and Grow. It is universally conceded that Pennsylvania must be carried and the question is who can do it. I have never heard anyone say that they believed that Seward or Chase could. And I am well satisfied that neither of them can carry Iowa against Douglas or any popular Northern Doughface. I have spent the fall and winter buying hogs in the two Southern Tier of counties west of the Des Moines and I tell you there is *no Seward or Chase men there*. The Republicans of that section are more like the Opposition of Missouri.

I confess I am not over sanguine of success next fall. We have men that can be elected *but we can not elect anybody*. You must recollect that the mass of the voters don't read political documents and consequently do not get excited and have great aversion to

voting for any man . . . . I should like to hear your views on the subject of the next Presidential Candidate. How does Forney feel? Could he be got to support Seward or Chase?

Various facts in the foregoing may well be noted before passing on. Senator Harlan's correspondents declare John Brown's raid into Virginia reprehensible, even though they may express some sympathy with the man's trials or admiration of his character. Again of like import, Abolitionism is anathema. Those who mention the presidential succession fall into two classes: the friends of particular candidates and the advocates of no particular candidate, save the man who can poll the most votes for the party's cause. Those who urge Gov. Seward, while earnest in their admiration of the man, nevertheless feel doubts as to his chances of winning in the election. Doing and dying with a favorite champion may be heroic; but if defeat is the result your cake will become dough. The cause of their hesitation was the existence of oldtime and obstreperous prejudices in the minds of the southern folk in the State, who hated abolitionists with the same vigor that they hated slavery and would have none of either. Further, Mr. Taylor refers to Abraham Lincoln as a definite candidate, one who is to be reckoned with, precisely as Governors Chase or Seward, with an assurance that indicates that he did not deem the consideration of the Illinoisan unfamiliar to his party chief at Washington. Senator Harlan's contingent candidacy for national honors is suggested by two correspondents—a suggestion the realization of which was by no means violently improbable. Five of the correspondents just cited were chosen at the state convention, January 18th, to represent the Republicans of Iowa at the national convention at Chicago: Messrs. Brown of Eldora, O'Connor of Muscatine, Rankin of Keokuk, Saunders of Mt. Pleasant, and Wilson of Fairfield.

## THE REPUBLICAN STATE CONVENTION

DES MOINES, JANUARY 18, 1860.

At two o'clock, Wednesday afternoon, January 18, 1860, the delegates to the Republican state convention assembled at Sherman's Hall, Third Street and Court Avenue, Des Moines. All contemporary accounts of the convention concur in declaring it the largest in point of numbers held in the State up to that time by the Republican party or by any other party. Both houses of the Legislature had adjourned, as many of its members were accredited delegates. General public interest in the work of the convention was so great that Sherman's Hall was "full to overflowing." For the first time in the history of the Republican party of Iowa its delegates had assembled for the sole purpose of selecting delegates to a national convention of the party.

*(a) The Preliminaries of Organization.*

The convention was called to order by Mr. John A. Kasson, chairman of the state central committee. On behalf of the committee Mr. Kasson nominated for temporary chairman, Mr. Ed Wright of Cedar county—a selection at once fitting and significant. He had been sent to the lower house of the General Assembly in 1856 and soon achieved distinction as a master of the technicalities of parliamentary procedure. Mr. Wright's home was near Springdale. John Brown's rendezvous in eastern Iowa previous to his raid on Harper's Ferry. He was a Quaker or Friend in religious belief. Like most, if not all, Friends, he was an Abolitionist in fact as well as in theory, being a promoter of the Underground Railway.<sup>1</sup> For secretary of the convention *pro tem*, Mr. Geo. A. Hawley, a lawyer of Leon, Decatur county, then quite prominent in the

party's councils in Southern Iowa, was nominated. Both nominations were confirmed without opposition.<sup>2</sup> In these days Mr. Wright would have instructed or entertained or harassed the delegates with a speech, essaying to sound "key-notes" for the ensuing campaign, but the reports indicate nothing of the sort. The work of organization proceeded at once.

In constituting the committees on credentials and on permanent organization, eleven members were named, one from each of the judicial districts of the State. Among the members of the committee on credentials were Col. Alvin Saunders of Mt. Pleasant, and Senator M. L. McPherson of Winterset; and among the committee on permanent organization were Dr. J. C. Walker of Ft. Madison, John Edwards of Chariton, Samuel Merrill of McGregor, and W. P. Hepburn of Marshalltown—delegates who either participated in the convention at Chicago, or who later had distinguished careers in the State.

The committee on credentials found that its task of canvassing the certificates of the delegates or their proxies, even though there were no contesting delegations, was not to be done in a few minutes; and two hours or more were consumed before they completed their work. The convention meanwhile, being indisposed to adjourn, indulged in hilarity and speeches *ex tempore*. Sundry leaders or orators were called upon by their admirers or henchmen—Messrs. Wm. Penn Clarke, James F. Wilson, Jacob Butler, John Edwards, C. C. Nourse, J. B. Grinnell, John A. Kasson, Henry O'Connor and others—some responding, some refusing. One of the speakers and the incidents of his speech were out of the ordinary and illustrate in an interesting fashion some of the phases of the convention.

The big chiefs, or those who would venture, had spoken; and intermittent noise and confusion prevailed. There was a mo-

<sup>1</sup>Charles Aldrich in *The Annals of Iowa* (3rd Series) II, 376-386, article on "General Ed Wright."

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily State Register*, Jan. 19, 1860. In what follows respecting the convention the account of the proceedings in the *Register*, Jan. 19 and 20, is taken unless otherwise stated.



ment's lull and some one (the writer suspects the late Charles Aldrich) called, "Johns!" Forthwith a striking figure arose in the fore left corner of the hall and started toward the platform. The convention was silent with astonishment for an instant, and then derisive laughter and shouts burst forth. The prospective speaker was of medium height, solidly built, vigorous of mien and tread, with a fine head firmly set on sturdy shoulders. He had seen sixty winters. Thin grey hair fell in straggling locks on his shoulders and a shaggy, unkempt beard covered his face and throat. His garb consisted of blue "home-made" jeans trousers and blouse that had done yeoman service. The artistic climax of the stranger's habiliments was his headgear. It consisted of a knit cap of blue and white yarn that "ran up to a peak," whence a tassel flared and flirted jauntily with the motion of body and head.

This picturesque figure advanced rapidly to the platform, indifferent to the uproar which his appearance produced, and faced the convention. He was as stalwart as a Sioux. His weatherbeaten features were stern and impassive. His keen grey-blue eyes swept the crowd with a haughty glance. One chronicler, who witnessed the scene, states that his manner strongly suggested "Brown of Ossawatimie." He made no effort to speak, for the shouts increased as the assembly got a full view. He was a veritable backwoodsman and a "sight" indeed. Chairman Wright hammered the table lustily to secure order but in vain. Not knowing the stranger's name and catching the eye of Mr. Charles Aldrich, seated near the edge of the platform, Mr. Wright stepped over to him and asked who "the old chap" was. "Why," came the reply, "that is Father John Johns of Webster county, and if you'll get this infernal mob still enough to hear him, he'll give them a good speech!"

The self-possession, perfect poise and dignity of the stranger, soon brought the delegates back to a proper sense of decorum, and Chairman Wright introduced him. He was a hunter and trapper and withal an itinerant Baptist preacher

of the "Free Will" persuasion, who lived on Skillet creek, near Border Plains, in south central Webster county. He was a Kentuckian by birth and upbringing and an Abolitionist of the militant type—a fact that made his emigration from his native heath expedient, if not imperative. The character and substance of his speech can be but partially indicated. He certainly fulfilled Mr. Aldrich's prediction, as all accounts refer to his effort with decided approval.

He mastered his audience at once. In manner he was serious, almost solemn in delivery. His language was concise, unadorned, pointed. Barbed and nipping words seem to have frequently expressed his thoughts with telling effect. The righteousness of the Republican cause and the party's great opportunity, the iniquities of Slavery and the aggressions of the Slavocrats in Kansas, in the courts and at Washington, the blunders and corruption of "Buck-Hannan's" administration, were the main considerations of his speech. Many of his sharp thrusts elicited rounds of applause.

The impression made by the speaker was somewhat complex and contradictory. Mr. G. H. Jerome, editor of *The Iowa City Republican*, informs his readers that his speech contained some of "the wittiest and quaintest remarks that it has ever been my fortune to hear in any convention. He repeatedly brought down the house."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand Mr. John Mahin writes his readers that the stranger "seemed himself,

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<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25, 1860. Correspondence dated Des Moines, Jan. 18.

The account of John Johns and his speech is based upon correspondence and interviews of the writer with Hon. Levi S. Coffin of Fort Dodge, Judge C. C. Nourse, and W. S. Moore of Des Moines, Charles Aldrich, late Curator of the Historical Department of Iowa, and Professor D. R. Dungan of Drake University, a nephew of John Johns; also upon the recollections of Charles Aldrich, published in July, 1892, entitled "Recollections of Rev. John Johns of Webster County," *Iowa Historical Record*, VIII, 321-325; and W. S. Moore's "A Notable Convention," *Iowa State Register*, September 4, 1892, p. 10.

The reader may study the features of John Johns in a reproduction of an old "tin type," taken two or three years after the convention, in a group of "Some of Iowa's Delegates-at-Large" to the Chicago Convention, opposite page 186 of Volume VIII of *The Annals*.

however, to be too earnest and solemn in his opposition to slavery to treat things jocularly, and scarcely indulged in a smile while on the stage.<sup>1</sup>

The speech of John Johns was the one dramatic episode of the convention. The subsequent action of the delegates indicates conclusively its striking effect. In the various reports of the proceedings of the convention in the press of the State his speech was the one thing especially mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

Between four and five o'clock the committee on credentials reported. According to the only published list of the counties represented, there were 406 delegates or their proxies present, representing 78 out of the 99 counties of the State. Had all of the counties sent their quota of delegates there would have been 466 present. In view of the modes and conditions of travel and the time of the year the representation was very large. Iowa City was the western terminus of the only railroad of consequence in the State. Steamboats theoretically and occasionally navigated the Des Moines river but transit thereon, especially in the tortuous courses of the upper fifty miles, was exceedingly uncertain. Stage coaches were the main public carriers and the condition of roads in country and town in Iowa in the middle of January in 1860 may easily be imagined. The public interest and personal zeal of partizans that brought so many delegates together at such a time under such conditions must have been very pronounced.

The counties not represented were Adair, Adams, Buena Vista, Calhoun, Cerro Gordo, Cherokee, Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, Harrison, Hancock, Ida, Jones, Montgomery, Monona, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Sac, Shelby, Union and Winnebago. For the most part the counties were near the borders of the State. Their quota of delegates, however, amounted all told to only 34. Twenty-two of the counties represented failed to send their entire quota, the number thus deficient being 36.

<sup>1</sup>*The Daily Muscatine Journal*, Jan. 23, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*The Burlington Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 23; *The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25; *The Muscatine Journal*, Jan. 23; *The Pella Gazette*, Jan. 25; *The Oskaloosa Herald* quoted in the *Hamilton Freeman*, Feb. 4, 1860.

(b) *The Character of the County Delegations.*

The delegates reported present represented the party and the State excellently both as regards the commonalty and the yeomanry as well as the leaders. Some of the State's best character and largest caliber were found among them—men who had been foremost in public affairs or who then were pressing rapidly to the front and were later to have distinguished careers in the State and the nation. It is so common in popular prints and among academic writers and those who class themselves with the elite, literary and social, to refer contemptuously to ordinary party conclaves, that brief mention of the careers of some of the delegates assembled in Sherman's Hall that afternoon may be worth while. A few delegates reported as present appear not to have attended. It is probable that they were selected by local caucuses or county conventions and were so reported to the committee on credentials, but even if not present their selection indicates the wishes of the local constituency.

A poll of the delegates with respect to their nativity and ages, their states of residence prior to coming to Iowa and years of their residence in the State previous to the convention, their education, general and technical, their occupations and professions, their religious creeds and church preferences, their party affiliations prior to joining the Republican party, their public honors and services before and after the convention, would be both interesting and instructive, but the writer does not possess complete data.

Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson county is credited with being one of the secretaries of the Pittsburg convention, February 22, 1856, which has substantial claims as the first Republican national convention. Mr. Andrew J. Stevens of Polk county was selected by that convention as the member of the national committee for Iowa and joined in the call of March 29, addressed "To the People of the United States" urging all "without regard to past political differences or divisions" to send delegates to a convention in Philadelphia

June 17, 1856. Mr. Stevens was the first chairman of the Republican state central committee in Iowa.

Nineteen counties sent 31 delegates who had attended as delegates at Iowa City, February 22, 1856, when the Republican party was organized in Iowa. They were John Shane and J. C. Traer of Benton county, J. A. Chapline, R. I. Thomas and W. W. Hamilton of Dubuque, Wells Spicer and Ed Wright of Cedar, J. W. Sherman of Dallas, Fitz Henry Warren of Des Moines, Jackson Orr of Greene, J. F. Brown of Hardin, S. McFarland of Henry, J. W. Jenkins of Jackson, R. Gaines and J. F. Wilson of Jefferson, E. and R. Clark of Johnson, G. D. Woodin of Keokuk, H. Taylor of Lee, H. C. Angle of Linn, Wm. M. Stone of Marion, Jacob Butler, S. Foster, John Mahin and Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek, B. F. Gue, J. C. Quinn and A. Sanders of Scott, and J. W. Caldwell and J. W. Norris of Wapello. Mr. J. B. Grinnell is credited with the authorship of the "Address" of the convention to the people of Iowa.<sup>1</sup>

Six of the delegates had been chosen by the first state convention in 1856 as delegates or alternates to represent the party at the first national Republican convention at Philadelphia, in June of that year: Messrs. F. H. Warren of Des Moines county and J. W. Caldwell of Wapello as delegates and Messrs. Jacob Butler, Thomas Drummond, J. W. Jenkins and Daniel Anderson, alternates. Three of those named could not attend and Messrs. J. W. Sherman of Dallas county, R. L. B. Clarke of Henry, and A. J. Stevens of Polk exercised their proxies at Philadelphia.

Mr. G. M. Swan of Warren county is credited with the authorship of the call that caused the first meeting in Columbus, Ohio, whence resulted the organization of the Republican party in Ohio,<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque was the secretary of that state convention when it was organized.<sup>3</sup>

Six of the delegates had been members of the Constitutional Convention of 1857 that had framed the supreme law of

<sup>1</sup>List of Delegates compiled by Mr. Louis Pelzer in *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, IV, 521-525.

<sup>2</sup>*History of Warren County* (1879) p. 502.

<sup>3</sup>*John Sherman's Recollections*, p. 76.



Iowa under which the people have since continued to live. Messrs. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson county, R. L. B. Clarke of Henry, John Edwards of Lucas, J. C. Traer of Tama, Wm. A. Warren of Jackson, and James F. Wilson of Jefferson. Two other delegates, Alvin Saunders of Henry and S. Goodrell of Polk county (then of Muscatine county) had been members of the Constitutional Convention of 1846, which framed the first constitution for the State; and Judge Ralph P. Lowe had been a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1844, that first undertook to construct a constitution for the people.

Fifty-six delegates had been, and of the number 47 then were and 32 later became members of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of Iowa. Thirty-six had been and 22 then were members of the state Senate and 26 thereafter became members of that body. Two delegates, Samuel McFarland of Henry county had been and John Edwards of Lucas then was the speaker of the House of Representatives; and two others, Rush Clark of Johnson and Jacob Butler of Muscatine county were later to become speaker. Messrs. W. W. Hamilton of Dubuque county and Oran Faville had been presidents of the Senate and Nicholas J. Rusch of Scott county then was; and Enoch W. Eastman of Hardin, B. F. Gue of Scott and Frank T. Campbell of Jasper county were thereafter to be elected lieutenant governor of the State, and thereby became presidents of the Senate. Three had had experience in the legislatures of older eastern states: Messrs. Jesse Bowen of Johnson and John Edwards of Lucas in Indiana, and Samuel Merrill of Clayton in the legislature of New Hampshire.

There were a number who had held, were then holding or were destined to hold prominent positions in the state government. Dr. Jesse Bowen of Johnson county was adjutant general of the militia. Mr. M. L. Morris, also of Johnson county, had been, and Mr. George W. Bemis of Buchanan was to become treasurer of state. Messrs. Andrew J. Stevens of Polk, John Pattee of Bremer had held, and Jonathan W. Cattell of Cedar was holding the office of auditor of state. W. A. Warren of Jackson was the candidate of the Whig party in

1848 for that office. Thomas H. Benton, Jr., of Pottawattamie had been superintendent of public instruction and Mr. Oran Faville afterwards held the office. Mr. Ed Wright, the temporary chairman was later to serve the people as secretary of state and Messrs. George A. Hawley of Decatur, J. W. Jenkins of Jackson, M. L. McPherson of Madison, J. W. Thompson of Scott had been or were later prominent but unsuccessful candidates for the office.

Ralph P. Lowe of Lee had been Governor of Iowa, retiring from that office the week preceding the convention; and Messrs. Samuel Merrill of Clayton, Wm. Larrabee of Fayette and Wm. M. Stone of Marion county, later became Chief Executive of the State. Messrs. J. B. Grinnell, Henry O'Connor, J. B. Weaver and Fitz Henry Warren became prominent candidates for the office.

A number had been, or later became, judges of the district or circuit courts. Thus John H. Gray of Polk county, Ralph P. Lowe of Lee, Samuel Murdock of Clayton, John W. Rankin of Lee, Wm. Smyth of Linn and W. M. Stone of Marion were judges prior to the convention. Messrs. M. B. Burdick of Winnebago county, D. D. Chase of Hamilton, H. C. Henderson of Marshall, Wm. Loughridge of Mahaska, C. C. Nourse of Polk, Geo. W. Ruddick of Bremer, and John Shane of Benton afterwards became judges.

There were present eight who had been or then were "County Kings," to-wit, the county judges who under the Code of 1851 exercised all the legislative, executive and judicial functions previously exercised by the county commissioners: G. M. Dean of Allamakee, F. B. Doolittle of Delaware, Oran Faville of Mitchell, P. P. Henderson of Warren, Lewis H. Smith of Kossuth, Wells Spicer of Cedar, Wm. Van O'Linda of Plymouth, and J. C. Hagans of Ringgold county.

As the work of the convention was not directly or immediately connected with "local issues" superficially considered, the presence of judges, even of the court of highest resort in the State, was not deemed inappropriate, and among the delegates we find the names of every member of the Supreme Court as then constituted, namely: Caleb Baldwin of Potta-

wattamie county, Ralph P. Lowe of Lee, and L. D. Stockton of Des Moines. George G. Wright of Van Buren had but a few days before left the court and was later to be its Chief Justice. Sundry important officials of that court were also in the convention. Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson was reporter of the supreme court from 1855 to 1860. The first attorney general of the state, Mr. D. C. Cloud, of Muscatine county, had been selected by the party convention at Muscatine, but his attendance at Des Moines is not recorded. Two of the delegates in Sherman's Hall afterwards became attorney general, Messrs. John F. McJunkin of Washington and Henry O'Connor of Muscatine.

Two members of the commission to revise the code of the State that submitted its report to the General Assembly in 1860, Messrs. Charles Ben Darwin of Des Moines county, who had been active in securing Abraham Lincoln's consent to speak in Burlington in 1858, and Wm. Smyth of Linn county, were among the delegates.

There were nine state officers in the convention as delegates; three district judges and three district attorneys; two county judges, three clerks of county courts, and one county treasurer — twenty-one all told. This number was not very large considering the fact that there were at the time about five hundred and fifty state and county officers, two-thirds of whom were probably Republicans.

If we include the members of the state central committee as servants of the convention, sixteen delegates had represented or afterwards represented the people of Iowa or other states in the national House of Representatives at Washington, many of them achieving noteworthy distinction in the deliberations and decisions of that body. They were Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque county, T. M. Bowen of Page, Rush Clark of Johnson, W. G. Donnan of Buchanan, John Edwards of Lucas, J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek, W. P. Hepburn of Marshall, A. W. Hubbard of Woodbury, John A. Kasson of Polk, Wm. Loughridge of Mahaska, Jackson Orr of Greene, Charles Pomeroy of Boone, Wm. Smyth of Linn, James Thorington of Scott, James B. Weaver of Davis and James F. Wilson of Jefferson.

Five of the delegates subsequently entered the Senate of the United States. Judge George G. Wright served from 1871 to 1876 when he refused re-election. Mr. T. M. Bowen, after a noteworthy career in Kansas and Arkansas, went to Colorado whence he was elected to the Senate in 1883 serving until 1889. The other three delegates who reached the Senate were Messrs. Alvin Saunders of Henry, James F. Wilson of Jefferson and W. B. Allison of Dubuque county, of whose careers more will be said. In 1854 Mr. Fitz Henry Warren was the leading candidate of the Whigs for the Senate, but Mr. James Harlan was finally elected. In 1858 Wm. Penn Clarke and Wm. Smyth were prominently mentioned and received votes in the party caucus when Mr. Grimes was selected.

In the executive departments of the national government some of the delegates had had, or later achieved, position and influence. Mr. Fitz Henry Warren had been assistant postmaster general under President Taylor and subsequently was secretary of the national committee of the anti-slavery Whigs in the presidential campaign of 1852. W. H. F. Gurley of Scott county, became President Lincoln's first district attorney in Iowa; ill health and death soon cut off a career of brilliant promise. The careers of Messrs. Henry O'Connor and H. C. Caldwell will require mention subsequently.

Three of the delegates accredited to the convention in Sherman's Hall that afternoon attained to such nation-wide influence that at various times they were urged by admirers in national political parties for presidential honors. Mr. J. B. Weaver of Davis county was twice nominated for the presidency; first, by the National Greenback party in 1880, receiving 350,000 votes, and, again, in 1892 by the People's party, obtaining 1,042,531 votes at the polls and 22 votes, representing five states, in the Electoral College. The mention of Messrs. H. C. Caldwell of Van Buren county and Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque county in this connection will be referred to later.

Within a year and a half after the convention met war drums were calling men to arms in defense of the Union, the existence of which was attacked because of the action they, or

their delegates for them, were to take at Chicago in deciding the national leadership. Nearly one-fifth of the delegates enlisted in the volunteer regiments.

Fifteen delegates became Captains: F. T. Campbell of Jasper county, M. Clark of Jefferson, C. F. Conn of Lee, G. M. Dean of Allamakee, F. M. Kelsey of Jackson, J. P. McEwen of Guthrie, P. G. C. Merrill, of Warren, J. C. Mitchell of Wapello, L. C. Noble of Fayette, Jackson Orr of Greene, J. H. Powers of Chickasaw, P. A. Queal of Story, R. M. Rippey of Greene, J. H. Shutts of Benton and W. P. Ward of Jackson.

Messrs. L. Dewey of Henry, W. G. Donnan of Fayette, W. C. Drake of Wayne, Charles Foster of Scott, H. B. Lynch of Iowa, Henry O'Connor of Muscatine, N. J. Rusch of Scott, John Safely of Linn and Calvin Taylor of Davis became Majors. Messrs. Charles Aldrich of Hamilton and L. C. Noble of Fayette were tendered the rank of Major but for business reasons declined the advance in official rank.

Doctors Wm. McK. Findley of Davis, D. C. Hastings of Buchanan and Amos Witter of Linn county became regimental surgeons.

Eight of the delegates became Lieutenant Colonels—J. W. Caldwell of Wapello, Geo. B. Corkhill of Henry, Thomas Drummond of Benton, J. Ferguson of Marion, W. P. Hepburn of Marshall, Geo. W. Howard of Chickasaw, J. W. Jenkins of Jackson, Samuel McFarland of Henry, and S. C. Van Anda of Delaware county.

Among Iowa's Colonels we find Daniel Anderson of Monroe, A. H. Bereman of Henry, H. C. Caldwell of Van Buren, P. P. Henderson of Warren, Samuel Merrill of Clayton, John Pattee of Bremer, J. W. Rankin of Lee, John Shane of Benton, and Wm. Smyth of Linn. Messrs. R. H. Ballinger of Boone and Henry Ramming of Scott, entered the army in Illinois and became Colonels. Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson as Paymaster had the rank of Colonel and M. L. McPherson attained the rank by brevet at the close of the war.

For distinguished service, bravery and meritorious conduct, Messrs. T. M. Bowen of Page, Thos. H. Benton, Jr., of Pottawattamie, D. B. Hillis of Davis, Hiram Scofield of Washing-



ton, Franklin A. Stratton of Webster, W. M. Stone of Marion, J. B. Weaver of Davis, and Ed Wright of Cedar county appear on the muster rolls at the close of the army as Brevet Brigadier Generals. Mr. John Edwards of Lucas attained full rank as Brigadier General of volunteers and Mr. Fitz Henry Warren of Des Moines county closed his army service in defense of the Union with the rank of Brevet Major General.

Among the delegates was a group that added special spice and flavor—a group that had been foremost in furthering the extreme anti-slavery views. They were all especially active in connection with Kansas, John Brown and Underground Railways. When the settlement of Kansas was the object of so much contention between the Slavocrats and the “Free state men” in 1856, Wm. Penn Clarke was the member for Iowa of the notable National Kansas Committee. He forwarded many “Liberty men” and Sharpe’s rifles to Tabor. When matters approached their crisis in 1856 a mass meeting was held in Iowa City to aid the emigration of anti-slavery men to Kansas, and a committee was appointed on which were Messrs. Clarke, M. L. Morris and I. N. [G. H.?] Jerome. One result of the meeting was that Mr. Geo. D. Woodin, then of Johnson, but later of Keokuk county, traveled throughout southern Iowa organizing local committees. Among the local committee-men were Judge Wm. M. Stone of Knoxville, Mr. A. J. Stevens of Des Moines, and Dr. B. S. Noble of Indianola.<sup>1</sup> It was Mr. R. L. B. Clarke of Henry county who led the fight in the Constitutional Convention of 1857 to strike “white” from the constitution and entitle Negroes to enjoy all political privileges, and it was Mr. Henry O’Connor of Muscatine who championed the unpopular measure on the hustings. When John Brown passed through the State the last time, in 1858 with the slaves which he had forcefully assisted in escaping from their masters in Missouri, Rev. Demas Robinson, near Des Moines, Mr. J. B. Grinnell, at Grinnell, and Dr. Jesse Bowen and Mr. W. P. Clarke at Iowa City gave him “aid and

<sup>1</sup>*History of Keokuk County* (1880) p. 432-3.

comfort" at risk of the public peace, and their personal safety.<sup>1</sup> When Virginia's sheriff, on Gov. Letcher's requisition, sought Barclay Coppoe, the youth of Springdale who was one of Brown's aids at Harper's Ferry, it was Messrs. Ed Wright of Cedar and B. F. Gue of Scott who gave the alarm at the capitol and Messrs. J. B. Grinnell, J. W. Cattell, auditor of state, Amos Hoag of Winneshiek and David Hunt of Hardin county, who co-operated in sending the post rider to warn the fugitive at the Quaker village in Cedar county.<sup>2</sup> Among other staunch promoters of the rights of Negroes and supporters of John Brown in the convention were Mr. Coker F. Clarkson of Grundy and Mr. Jacob Butler of Muscatine. It was Mr. Butler who presided at the Congregational Council in Chicago in 1859, when some stout anti-slavery resolutions were adopted. All the foregoing took part in the proceedings in Sherman's Hall.

A number of the delegates had then engaged or later engaged in literary effort of the formal sort to an extent that would entitle them to enrollment among the "literary folk" of the State. Excluding the judges of the supreme court who are book-makers *ex officio*, and editors of weekly or daily newspapers, there were seventeen who have to their credit published writings dealing with matters of historical or technical interest, appearing in the form of articles or brochures, biographies, memoirs, official reports and treatises. Of the legal work of Charles Ben Darwin, especially his report recommending a new code of civil and criminal procedure, a recent commentator says: "He exerted more influence, probably, than any one man of his age and experience upon the practice of the State of Iowa."<sup>3</sup> Mr. D. C. Cloud, Iowa's first attorney general, originally designated as one of the delegates from Muscatine county, wrote two stout treatises on the *War Powers of the President* and *Monopolies and the People*. Messrs. C. F. Clarkson, Suel Foster and J. H. Sanders became extensive writers upon farming, horticulture and stockbreeding. Wm. Penn Clarke, and Hawkins Taylor later made sub-

<sup>1</sup>*Annals of Iowa* (1st Series) Vol. IV, 667-669, 715-719.

<sup>2</sup>Gue, *History of Iowa*, II, 17.

<sup>3</sup>Cole & Ebersole, *The Courts and Legal Profession of Iowa*, 1, 87.

stantial contributions to the historical literature of the State. Articles from the pen of James F. Wilson appeared in our national magazines. The letters of Fitz Henry Warren to *The Springfield (Mass.) Republican* and later to the N. Y. *Daily Tribune* have become historic. It was his celebrated criticisms of the course of the national government in the early days of the Civil War under the caption, "On to Richmond," that precipitated the disaster at Bull Run. In 1855 Mr. H. P. Scholte put forth an interesting brochure on *American Slavery*, containing an acute discussion of that moot question. Mr. J. B. Grinnell has given us a considerable volume of recollections, entitled *Men and Events of Forty Years*. Mr. J. H. Powers wrote *Historical Reminiscences of Chickasaw County*. Mr. Wm. Larrabee is the author of *The Railroad Question*, an energetic discussion of a vexed question. Mr. B. F. Gue, besides extensive contributions to local biography and history, wrote four substantial volumes entitled *The History of Iowa*. L. D. Ingersoll, celebrated in Iowa during the "sixties" as a war correspondent under the *nom de plume* of "Linkensale," wrote three considerable volumes, *Iowa and the Rebellion*, *The Life and Times of Horace Grebley* and *The History of the War Department*. Besides sundry minor contributions of worth, Mr. John A. Kasson wrote a scholarly treatise on *The Evolution of the Constitution of the United States and History of the Monroe Doctrine* which has become one of the standard references on these subjects in all our public and university libraries. Mr. Charles Aldrich, an editorial writer of great force and vivacity, in addition to the authorship of numerous articles re-established and for sixteen years edited *The Annals of Iowa*. His *magnum opus* in the conclusion of his career was the creation of the Historical Department of Iowa and bringing into being the handsome, stately structure on capitol hill which now houses his precious Collections and the increasing historical lore of the State of Iowa.

It is possible, of course, that the Republicans of Iowa have had state conventions whereat a higher average of ability and achievement and a greater number of notables have been in

attendance than was true of the conclave of the party's chiefs and workers at Sherman's Hall on January 18, 1860, but the writer doubts if the fact can be demonstrated.

(c) *Selecting the Delegates to the National Convention.*

For the committee on permanent organization, Mr. Charles Foster of Scott county, reported in favor of the nomination of the following delegates for the offices mentioned. Their recommendations were concurred in. Mr. W. W. Hamilton, of Dubuque, who had won distinction as presiding officer of the state Senate in 1856 and 1858, was made chairman. Pursuant to an amiable custom doubtless not free from artful design, ten delegates were designated as "Vice-Presidents"; A. W. Hubbard of Woodbury. Mr. J. B. Grinnell of Powe among the number being Benedict Hugel of Lee county, Judge shiek, Jackson Orr of Greene, Mr. Jacob Butler of Muscatine, Mr. Francis Mangold of Dubuque, Mr. Amos Hoag of Winneshie and Mr. Charles Pomeroy of Boone. D. D. Chase of Hamilton, J. G. Davenport of Linn, J. K. Graves of Dubuque, T. R. Oldham of Clarke, Henry Lischer of Scott, and H. P. Scholte of Marion, were made secretaries. In the selection of Messrs. Hugel, Mangold, Lischer and Scholte, one may discern delicate, and as diplomats phrase it, "distinguished consideration," of the foreign vote in the eastern counties. In the exaltation of so many notables of Dubuque one suspects shrewd tactics anent the senatorial election then pending.

The delegates proceeded at once with the business of the convention. On motion of Mr. Hawley of Decatur county, it was provided that the entire vote of a county could be cast by the delegates or delegate present. Senator Drummond of Benton county then introduced a resolution directing that the convention proceed to elect "eight delegates to the national Republican convention, four from the State at large, and two from each congressional district — but one delegate to be elected at a time and by a *viva voce* vote, on a call of the counties, a majority being required to elect." Mr. Brown of Black Hawk moved to amend by striking out eight and in-

serting two from "each judicial district" of which there were eleven in the State, the delegates to be "named by each district." As a substitute Mr. Gue of Scott county moved the adoption of the following:

Resolved, That the convention now proceed to elect two delegates from each judicial district, to be selected by the delegates from each district, and five delegates at large, to be elected by a *viva voce* vote upon call of the counties, one delegate to be elected at a time.

We are told that upon the introduction of Senator Drummond's motion "an animated discussion ensued," lasting for two hours. The enthusiasm of the disputants and the delegates at times "kindled into a blaze." The correspondent of *The Hawk-Eye* tells us that "it was dark when these preliminary matters were settled and the entire afternoon was consumed in boisterous though good-humoured debate in which neither the chairman nor any member could define what the question before the convention was."<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gue's motion was finally modified by an amendment of Senator Drummond's providing for selection of the delegates by a plurality vote.

The convention first took an informal ballot on delegates at large with the following result:

L. C. Noble, 43; T. J. W. Tabor, 20; W. Penn Clarke, 52; J. A. Kasson, 28; Henry O'Connor, 36; N. J. Rusch, 12; J. W. Norris, 31; J. F. Wilson, 22; A. Sa[un]ders, 33; M. L. McPherson, 16; S. Bagg, 5; Thomas Seeley, 10; J. B. Grinnell, 11; Scattering, 18.

The convention thereupon proceeded to a formal ballot. The distribution of the votes among the sundry favorites named on the several ballots is not less interesting than in the informal ballot, and a transcript of the proceedings as published follows:

1—J. W. Norris 4, Thomas Seeley 4, W. Penn Clarke 110, T. J. W. Tabor 52, J. A. Kasson 5, A. Saunders 33, Henry O'Connor 15, L. C. Noble 2, M. L. McPherson 4, J. F. Wilson 31.

On motion W. Penn Clark of Johnson county was unanimously elected a delegate at large.

<sup>1</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 23, 1860.



2d formal ballot—L. C. Noble 134, J. W. Norris 27, H. O'Connor 37, J. A. Kasson 39, M. L. McPherson 21, J. F. Wilson 51, A. Saunders 22.

On motion, L. C. Noble of Fayette county, was unanimously elected the second delegate at large.

3rd formal ballot—J. A. Kasson 161, J. W. Rankin 16, H. O'Connor 145, J. W. Norris 4, T. Seeley 4.

On motion, J. A. Kasson of Polk county, was unanimously elected the third delegate at large.

4th ballot—H. O'Connor 161, J. W. Rankin 55, J. F. Wilson 116, M. L. McPherson 6.

On motion, H. O'Connor of Muscatine county, was unanimously elected the 4th delegate at large.

6th [5th?] ballot—C. F. Clarkson 23, J. F. Wilson 148, J. W. Rankin 110, E. Bloomer 17, N. J. Rusch 9.

On motion, J. F. Wilson of Jefferson county, was unanimously elected as the fifth delegate at large.

The selections apparently did not suffice or they perhaps produced some discontent on the part of the friends of several receiving votes but unsuccessful, for immediately, on motion of Dr. Bowen of Johnson county, the following persons were unanimously elected as additional delegates at large:—Judge J. W. Rankin of Lee county, Senator M. L. McPherson of Madison, Mr. C. F. Clarkson of Grundy, and Lt.-Governor N. J. Rusch of Scott, making nine altogether.

The roll of the judicial districts was then called for nominations for delegates to represent the local constituencies. The nominees apparently were all unanimously elected without delay or dispute. It is not indicated whether they had been selected by district caucuses held prior to the assembly of the delegates in Sherman's Hall or by conferences on the floor during the convention. The following are the names of the gentlemen elected in the order of the roll:

The first district selected Mr. Alvin Saunders of Henry and Dr. J. C. Walker of Lee county. For the second, H. Clay Caldwell of Van Buren and Mr. M. Baker of Wapello [Wayne?] county were designated. The third district chose Mr. Benjamin Rector of Fremont and Mr. George A. Hawley of Decatur county. The fourth district nominated Judge A. W. Hubbard of Woodbury and Mr. J. E. Blackford of Kos-

suth county. The fifth selected Messrs. Thomas Seeley of Guthrie and C. C. Nourse of Polk county. For the sixth, Judge W. M. Stone of Marion and Mr. J. B. Grinnell of Poweshiek were nominated. The seventh district nominated Mr. Wm. A. Warren of Jackson and Mr. John W. Thompson of Scott. The nominees of the eighth district were Mr. John Shane of Benton and Judge Wm. Smyth of Linn county; and of the ninth, Messrs. Wm. B. Allison of Dubuque and A. F. Brown of Black Hawk county. The tenth district nominated Judge Reuben Noble of Clayton county and Mr. E. G. Bowdoin of Floyd county. The eleventh district presented the names of Mr. Wm. P. Hepburn of Marshall county and Mr. J. F. Brown of Hardin county.

All of the delegates chosen at Des Moines attended the national convention at Chicago save three—Messrs. J. E. Blackford, H. C. Caldwell and A. W. Hubbard. Their proxies were exercised by Messrs. Jacob Butler, J. W. Caldwell and Herbert M. Hoxie. Mr. R. L. B. Clarke was with the delegates in the Wigwam and took part in their conferences and decisions as an alternate.<sup>1</sup> In what follows the proxies and their principals will not be distinguished. As the years have increased, the distinction of the convention at Chicago has increased and likewise the claims to membership in Iowa's delegation. The writer has come upon the names of four others for whom biographers or eulogists have claimed membership therein; but so far as he can discover without warrant. We may suspect that attendance at the convention as unofficial representatives has been transmuted into official representation.

As soon as the delegates to Chicago were decided upon, Senator Thomas Drummond introduced the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the delegation from Iowa are hereby instructed to cast the vote of the State as a unit, and that a majority of the delegates determine the action of the delegation.

The motion was lost. Whether or not there was any debate thereon and by what number of votes the resolution was de-

<sup>1</sup>Interview with Judge C. C. Nourse and letter of R. L. B. Clarke to the writer (Mss.).

feated are not recorded. The significance of the resolution, the design of the mover, and the real purport of the action of the convention in refusing thus to control the course of their delegates at the national convention, can only be surmised. The mover was an able and tried tactician in practical politics. He had attended the first national convention of the Republican party at Philadelphia in 1856 as a delegate and he was an influential editor and leader in the party's councils in the State. It is hardly probable that his resolution was unpremeditated, introduced on the spur of the moment on a vagrant impulse. He knew that in national party conventions, as in state or local conventions, a delegation or its leaders are potent when they have their delegates well in hand and can "count on them" and can swing them to the right or to the left at critical junctures in manoeuvres. Divided delegations, like dissevered army corps, are usually impotent. Judge McLean's nomination at Philadelphia in 1856 might have been accomplished with ease had Ohio's delegation been a unit on his behalf instead of split asunder by bitter, obstinate factional differences and preferences. Senator Drummond probably had the avoidance of such inefficiency in mind. Moreover, it is not unlikely that he expected the resolution, if adopted, to operate in favor of the candidacy of Senator Seward. Senator Drummond, as we have seen, entertained radical anti-slavery views, sympathizing frankly with John Brown. He was also a staunch friend and supporter of Senator Harlan, who was a known friend and admirer of the Senator from New York, and then or very soon thereafter becoming an advocate of his nomination at Chicago. The activity of Gov. Seward's friends in all of the northern states, straight west of New York, on behalf of his candidacy and their success in securing instructions for him in all, save Iowa, gives color to the surmise here ventured. It is the recollection of Judge C. C. Nourse that it was the opinion in the lobbies that Gov. Seward was to be the beneficiary of the resolution.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Letter of Judge C. C. Nourse to the writer (Mss.)

An account of the proceedings in *Der Demokrat*, the German Republican paper of Davenport, gives grounds for thinking that possibly specific instructions for Senator Seward were formally presented and formally rejected. In a brief notice of the convention we find the statement that "ein antrag die delegaten zu instruiren wurde verworfen." This assertion that instructions were defeated is followed by another indicating the self-control of the delegates: "Die stimmung der convention war sehr stark zu gunsten von Wm. H. Seward fur President." Two facts make one skeptical as to the former statement. First, it is the only one to the same effect the writer has discovered in the press reports or in the editorial comments on the proceedings; and we should normally expect a matter of such vital significance in the political contest then approaching its culmination to be generally referred to in contemporary comment. Second, the context suggests some confusion. Just preceding the first sentence quoted is the statement that the convention adopted Senator Drummond's resolution providing for a "plurality" rule in voting. Apparently Senator Drummond's resolution to bind the national delegates by the unit rule was confused with another motion by him amending Mr. Gue's, whereby the convention should elect the delegates to the national convention by a plurality instead of by a majority of the votes cast. On the other hand, the publisher of *Der Demokrat*, Mr. Henry Lischer, and one of its leading writers, Mr. Henry Ramming, were both delegates from Scott county to the convention. One or the other, doubtless penned the account from which the statement above is quoted and we may presume that he wrote advisedly. Whatever may have been the facts we shall see that the rejection of Senator Drummond's resolution providing for the unit rule was subsequently considered as equivalent to refusal to instruct for Senator Seward.<sup>1</sup>

The defeat of Senator Drummond's resolution was followed by a motion to adjourn until eight o'clock. As the primary purpose of the convention had been accomplished one feels

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<sup>1</sup>*Der Demokrat*, Jan. 21, 1860.

curiosity as to the object of reassembling the delegates. The delegates were in the city and other social diversion for such a number may not have been feasible and sociability and speech-making may have been the only matters contemplated. Nevertheless, those familiar with popular assemblages are likely to suspect shrewd designs. Mass meetings, unless controlled by dominant leaders, are the prey of fitful, contradictory and erratic currents. Emotionalism is wont to prevail; sentimentalism rather than sense. Unforeseen events, oftentimes artfully produced, may result in gusts, flurries and sometimes violent outbursts of feeling that drive the delegates pell-mell in some direction. Skillful tacticians at such times easily accomplish purposes otherwise impossible. The convention had made no declaration of principles. It had refused to bind its national delegates by instructions. Public discussion was rife with issues that aroused intense animosity. Partisans of sundry views, ardent advocates of specific courses, energetic friends of candidates, disappointed in obtaining action favorable to their hopes may have had some expectation of success in furthering their cause or candidate "after supper."

Whatever the considerations or designs, the delegates on reassembling transacted but little business; but that little was interesting and significant. Two more delegates at large were added to the nine selected at the afternoon session. They were the Rev. Henry P. Scholte, editor of *The Pella Gazette* and founder of the Holland community at Pella, and Rev. John Johns, the pioneer preacher from Webster county whose speech had so stirred the convention a few hours before. The selection of the former signified again recognition of the strategic importance of the foreign vote in the coming campaign, and the choice of the latter may have indicated an appreciation of the votes in the congregations of the Baptist church or a spontaneous proof of the power of the oratory of the itinerant preacher.

The convention then converted itself into a "mass ratification meeting." Speeches were delivered by Messrs. Henry O'Connor and Jacob Butler of Muscatine, Wm. Penn Clarke of Johnson, Enoch W. Eastman of Hardin, C. C. Nourse and



John A. Kasson of Polk, Geo. May of Marion, James F. Wilson of Jefferson, and Rev. John Johns. "The speeches," Mr. Jerome of Iowa City reported, "were very spicy, full of marrow and the meeting was enthusiastic to a high degree."<sup>1</sup> In the course of his speech at the evening session Mr. Johns, while indicating very clearly his strong personal preference for the nomination of Wm. H. Seward for the presidency by the Republicans at Chicago, is credited with the observation that, in case the Democrats in their national convention at Charleston should nominate Stephen A. Douglas, the Republicans could not do better than to nominate Abraham Lincoln who in popular judgment had worsted the "Little Giant" in their celebrated debate in 1858.

Before one can justly estimate the conduct of the delegates or the significance of their action, the conditions under which the business was transacted must be appreciated. The comments of two eye witnesses, one a participant as a delegate, the other a representative of the opposite political party, are interesting. "R," correspondent of *The Gate City*, penned the following on the night of the convention:

Impartial justice requires the statement that it was the noisiest, most uproarious, confused, good-natured, hardworking and enthusiastic convention ever witnessed in Iowa or any other country on this mundane sphere. It was also, I believe, the largest Republican convention ever held in this State.<sup>2</sup>

The correspondent of *The Dubuque Herald* after referring with customary partizan irony to the claim of Republicans that their party comprehended "all the decency and intelligence," wrote (Jan. 23):

It was the most disorderly, uproarious and undignified gathering that has lately come to the knowledge of the peaceful denizens of this locality. Still they got through with the business for which they assembled in a manner most satisfactory to everybody but themselves.<sup>3</sup>

Evidently the delegates gave their feelings full vent and the right of way. Spontaneity of expression rather than docility

<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*The Daily Gate City*, Jan. 23, 1860. Corr. dated at Des Moines, Jan. 17.

<sup>3</sup>*The Dubuque Herald*, Feb. 1, 1860. Corr. dated at Des Moines, Jan. 23.

and obedient concurrence in a program, constituted the definitive condition in the determination of the conclusions of the convention. Some considerations will demonstrate this.

(d) *Did a Machine and Wirepullers or Common Sense Control the Convention?*

A distinguished national historian, contrasting the character of the first Republican national convention at Philadelphia and that of the second convention at Chicago, designated the delegates to the first as "liberty-loving enthusiasts and largely volunteers," and those to the second, as mainly "wirepullers" and "machine politicians" chosen by "means of the organization peculiar to a powerful party" who were, he adds, "in political wisdom the pick of the Republicans."<sup>1</sup>

One might ask for definitions of terms. Be the merits of the contrast what they may it is well to keep in mind that those unfamiliar with the practical procedure of politics are wont to regard philanthropists and reformers who initiate political and social movements as always animated by purely ethical considerations, as free from malice and thoughts of personal gain, and "politicians" as wirepullers whose ways are devious and dark, whose motives are petty, or sordid or malevolent, who interpret the public welfare in terms of personal profit or party advantage with the same objective in view. Any one who has had but little intimate acquaintance with philanthropists and politicians knows that very prosaic human considerations prompt and energize both species of mankind. The chicanery and hypocrisy of philanthropists are not less extensive nor less vicious than the sordidness of politicians. Moreover, experience is likely to make one conclude that the sentimentalism and stupidities of enthusiasts in politics and government are more to be dreaded than the designs of politicians pulling wires and the public purse strings for personal or party advantage.

The delegates selected by the Republicans of Iowa to represent their interests and wishes at the Chicago convention were,

<sup>1</sup>Rhodes *History of the United States*, II, 457.

of course, "politicians." They were politicians in the old Greek sense of citizens. They were politicians in the sense of familiars or workers in the science and art of government. They were politicians in the sense of tacticians adept in the management and manœuvres of party caucuses and campaigns. Many of them, doubtless all of them, sustained reputations in their bailiwicks for capacity and force, for caution and shrewdness, for patience and persistence in the pursuit and accomplishment of personal or party purposes. They are, nevertheless, individually and in the aggregate, thoroughly representative of the ability and achievement of the yeomanry and of the leadership of the Republican party then in control of the public affairs of the people of Iowa. Moreover the mode of their selection gives no basis for the assumption that the delegates were either "machine" politicians or the appointees of the managers of a "machine" in the disagreeable sense in which the term is used nowadays.

There was in the parlance of the day, a group of party leaders known throughout the State as the "capitol crowd," who no doubt worked to further their interests in the selection of the delegates; but if they had a program or "slate" it was completely smashed and their forces utterly routed. "The old wheel horses in the Republican team," a correspondent of *The Hawk-Eye* informs us, "opposed sending any more than one man to cast one vote . . ." but the delegation selected exceeded four delegates for every vote of Iowa's quota. Senator Grimes in his letter to Governor Kirkwood said he would select "a goodly number to cast the vote of Iowa," but he probably did not think of more than sixteen delegates. The larger the number in a delegation the less the certainty of concert of action. Some of the leaders later indicated publicly their disapproval of the large number. Mr. Jacob Rich of the *Buchanan County Guardian* could "not see the object,"<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Teesdale ironically observed:—"If the hall [at Chicago] is large enough the delegates will all probably be admitted and exert their influence on the action

<sup>1</sup>*The Daily Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 23, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*Buchanan County Guardian*, Jan. 26, 1860.

of the body."<sup>1</sup> All of which means that the convention went counter to the wishes of the leaders or of any ring or machine that may have sought to control its action. It is not without significance that the conventions of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, two states whose political complexions were very dubious, likewise sent large delegations to Chicago, the former with seven votes sending 21 delegates and the latter with 27 votes sending 108 delegates.

The distribution of the votes of the convention in the informal and formal ballots for delegates at large affords interesting evidence of the absence of autocratic, domineering leadership so characteristic of a machine as the public now uses the term. On the informal ballot the votes were divided among more than thirteen candidates. The highest vote cast for any one man was only 52 for Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke. Two only of those voted for had attained the position that in these days would insure them the title of a party "boss." They were Mr. John A. Kasson, then chairman of the state central committee, and Mr. Alvin Saunders, who served Senator Harlan so efficiently as his field officer. But both fell below four other candidates in votes received in that informal ballot. The second man in that ballot, Mr. L. C. Noble, was a merchant of West Union, in Fayette county, and on the second formal ballot he was elected, winning over Messrs. Kasson, O'Connor, McPherson, Norris, Saunders and James F. Wilson, all potent leaders of state-wide fame. He was not conspicuous as a state leader. He was then a member of the lower House of the Legislature and for the first time. He was, according to the recollections of old associates, a likable and popular man in Fayette county and in the General Assembly. The votes on all of the ballots for delegates at large demonstrate conclusively that there were neither party bosses in charge of the convention nor dominating favorites among the leaders.

Another highly interesting fact in line with this conclusion was the absence of nearly all of the names of the party chiefs then honored with high official position, either at the state

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<sup>1</sup>*Daily Iowa State Register*, Jan. 20, 1860.

capitol at Des Moines or at the national capitol at Washington. Senator Grimes had urged Gov. Kirkwood to secure a place on the delegation; but his name was not presented at all. None of the men in what we may designate as the major state offices were voted for and neither Congressman Wm. Vandever nor S. R. Curtis, nor Senators James W. Grimes or James Harlan received votes. Their conspicuous positions doubtless operated to prevent the consideration of their names in the balloting. As prudent politicians, they would realize that any effort on the part of themselves personally or of their promoters, to secure the honor of going to Chicago when so many were anxious to attend the national convention with official credentials, might irritate and mayhap alienate friends and supporters and have serious adverse results upon their careers afterwards. They or their influential friends unquestionably prevented the use of their names. Senator Harlan's candidacy for reelection to the national Senate was then in the balance and this fact would of itself make him and his friends backward in urging his name as a delegate.

Mr. Teesdale thought that it would be "regarded abroad, as somewhat singular that no member of our Senatorial or Congressional delegation has a place on the delegation."<sup>1</sup> Iowa's course in this, however, was typical of the course of the conventions of most of the states sending delegates to the Chicago convention. That convention was noteworthy for the absence of congressional leaders. New York and Rhode Island alone of the twenty-seven states represented, each sent one of their respective Senators, and Missouri and Pennsylvania each sent one Congressman and Ohio sent two.

Again the rejection of the resolution to bind the delegation by the unit rule and the absence or apparent absence of any motion to instruct the delegation, indicates clearly the democratic and popular character of the convention in Sherman's Hall. Anything suggestive of control of the delegation either as to numbers or as to free expression of the preferences of the delegates or their freedom of decision at Chicago, produced

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<sup>1</sup>*Ibid*



spirited debate and plump negatives and contrary action by the convention. The effect of the speech of John Johns suggests that spontaneous action rather than a program, controlled the delegates.

The refusal of the convention to bind its delegates by a unit rule and its non-action in the matter of instructions, possess significance in other respects. Describing the conduct of the convention in a letter to his paper, *The Iowa City Republican*, Mr. G. H. Jerome observed: "The mention of the name of W. H. Seward, the first man of the Republic, awoke the echoes of the hall. I think among all the candidates named, Seward is the decided favorite of the people of Iowa."<sup>1</sup> Whether the enthusiasm that made those echoes animated chiefly the non-official onlookers in Sherman's Hall or the delegates, is not indicated; but it is probable that sentiment in favor of Senator Seward prevailed decidedly over that for any other candidate. Under such circumstances the decision of his partizans not to press a resolution of instructions affords us substantial grounds for believing that conservative counsels predominated. In Oregon, Kansas, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan the friends and promoters of his candidacy pushed and secured specific instructions binding the delegations to vote for him. They sought them in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts; and it was only by careful management and shrewd tactics, especially in Maine<sup>2</sup> and Massachusetts that Seward's opponents prevented similar resolutions in those states. His admirers and advocates at Des Moines appreciated that his popularity with the major portion of the rank and file of the Republicans was one thing, and his popularity with a belligerent minority and with the independent voters of the opposition was or might be an entirely different matter. When majorities are small and uncertain victories are won in the middle grounds. Iowa's Republicans at Sherman's Hall were controlled by clear-eyed and cool-headed party leaders, and not by reckless, erratic, tempestuous en-

<sup>1</sup>*The Iowa City Republican*, Jan. 25, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>C. S. Hamlin's, *Life and Times of Hannibal Hamlin*, pp. 331-351. Boutwell's *Reminiscences of Sixty Years of Public Life*, I, 253.

thusiasts. Mr. Jerome's own account of the proceedings illustrates this admirably; for in the sentence immediately following the one just quoted anent the popularity of Seward he says, "The delegation, however, goes uninstructed. This is as it should be." And in this policy or procedure the action of Iowa was precisely the action of Indiana and of all the New England states, save the one that had a candidate of its own to commend to the convention at Chicago.

(e) *The Delegation to the National Convention.*

However we may regard the delegates sent by the Republicans of Iowa to the convention at Chicago, whether as patriots or as politicians, an examination of their careers before and after the convention in Sherman's Hall will convince most persons that they represented their constituents excellently, their patriotism and their prejudices no less than their principles and policies.

The delegates were comparatively young men, their average age being 38 years. Their ages ranged from 27 to 60 years. Three were under 30 years. Ten were between 30 and 35; eleven between 35 and 40; eight between 40 and 50; and three between 50 and 60 years.

The nativity of the delegates approximated the nativity of the state's citizenship. Six were natives of New England states. Six were born in New York and two in Pennsylvania. Nine were born in states south of Mason and Dixon's line. Eight were natives of Ohio, one of Indiana, and one of Illinois. Two were born in Ireland, one in Holstein, and one in Holland.

The duration of their residence in Iowa prior to 1860 ranged from three to twenty years. Thirteen delegates had lived in the State an average of only five years. Fourteen had been residents for an average of 13 years and four had lived in Iowa for 23 years. The average duration of the 31 known was twelve years.

As regards their education in the narrow sense of "schooling," one-half of the delegation had but little more than the

usual training afforded in the common schools. They had obtained their education in the give and take of ordinary affairs, behind the plow or at the work bench, in the counting room or behind the counter, at the type-setter's case or in the editorial room, at the bar or on the bench. Nearly half of the delegates had attended academies, then often approximating collegiate institutions in rank or public esteem. Ten delegates had been students at colleges or universities, in most cases being graduates. The major number with collegiate training were natives of northern states, chiefly of New England and the Middle States. Two had been matriculates of European Universities.

In point of scholastic training and attainment, in respect of the mastery of the ancient or classical and the modern languages, and familiarity with the writings of the learned doctors in philosophy and law, Mr. Henry P. Scholte of Marion county, probably could easily claim superior rank. He had his first training at the Athenaeum Illustre of Amsterdam and then became a student and graduate of the University of Leyden. Lt. Governor Rusch of Scott county, was perhaps entitled to second place: he had been educated first at the Gymnasium in Meldorf and thereafter he studied "eine zeit lang" at the University of Kiel until his participation in the agitation for more liberal government in North Germany in 1846-47 made his emigration to the United States highly expedient.<sup>1</sup> Of the native born, Mr. John A. Kasson was *facile princeps*. He was a graduate of the University of Vermont and early attracted public notice as a writer on legal matters, and as an orator. In 1849, Charles Sumner had spoken of an article containing his suggestions for the reform of the legal procedure of Massachusetts in flattering terms<sup>2</sup> and in

<sup>1</sup>Eiboeck, *Die Deutschen von Iowa*, p. 417.

<sup>2</sup>The article referred to may be found in *The Monthly Law Reporter* (Boston) June, 1849, v. 12 (n. s. v. 2) pp. 61-80, entitled *Law Reform—Practice*.

Mr. Sumner's commendation is expressed in strong terms. Three sentences from his letter follow: "I admired the vivid style, the facility of practical illustration, and the complete mastery of the subject which it showed. You have done good service to Jurisprudence, and helped discharge the debt which Lord Bacon tells us we owe to our profession, by this able exposition of a vicious system. I trust that our Commonwealth will have the wisdom to adopt your suggestions." Charles Sumner to John A. Kasson, New Bedford, July 12, 1849. The original is in the Aldrich Collections in the Historical Department of Iowa. The letter is reprinted *in extenso* in E. L. Pierce's *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner*, Vol. III, 43.

1854 when the Chamber of Commerce of St. Louis invited the legislators of Illinois to be their guests at a banquet, Mr. Kasson, although a young man, was asked to serve as the toast-master, so great then was his capacity for polished speech.<sup>1</sup>

The delegates were engaged in various occupations; but strict classification is not easy for the reason that business and professional pursuits were not then sharply differentiated, nor did those therein always specialize and confine themselves to one line. Nor was private business much lessened during the occupancy of public office. Mr. Coker F. Clarkson of Grundy county had been an influential editor in Indiana, but in 1860 he was a farmer:—then and thereafter, however, was constantly engaged in editorial work. Mr. Jacob Butler of Muscatine, while a well known lawyer, was then largely interested in the operation of banks, a gas company and in railroad construction. Mr. J. B. Grinnell had been technically educated for the ministry and for many years he had followed that profession, doing so even at that time, but he listed himself as a farmer and wool grower and was constantly engaged in town and railroad building. Mr. Scholte while editing *The Pella Gazette*, was simultaneously acting as a banker, as a lawyer, as a land broker, as a preacher, having been especially educated for the latter profession. Taking those occupations in which they were primarily engaged or in which they were chiefly known, the delegation to Chicago contained one banker, two preachers, four merchants, five farmers and twenty-three lawyers.

The absence of editors from the delegation is noteworthy, particularly in view of the considerable number present in Sherman's Hall, and their normal potency in political matters. Aside from mere chance, two facts may account for their absence. Some of the prominent editors were at that time either occupants of profitable positions in the State or were candidates for them. We have already seen that half a dozen prominent editors were talked of as candidates for public printer. Again the profits of newspapers then depended largely upon the favorable disposition of the allowances of

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<sup>1</sup>*Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, I, 612.

state and local budgets in the matter of public printing, namely for the publication of the laws and the "delinquent tax lists." Consequently for editors to push for the honor of going to the national convention as accredited delegates was not prudent. However, Mr. Scholte, Mr. A. F. Brown of Black Hawk, Mr. W. Penn Clarke, of Johnson, Mr. C. F. Clarkson, of Grundy, and Mr. Wm. M. Stone of Marion county, had been editors of considerable experience.

The careers of many of the delegates were then or were to become full of honors and achievement in the public service of the State and of the nation, both in peace and in war. The names of Allison, Caldwell, and Clarkson, of Grinnell, Hepburn and Hoxie, of Hubbard, Kasson and Reuben Noble, of Nourse, O'Connor and Saunders, of Smyth, Stone and Wilson, —these were names to conjure with in Iowa during most of the sixty years just past.

Nearly all of the delegates had made their mark in state affairs before their selection by the convention at Des Moines. Nine had helped to organize the Republican party at Iowa City:—Messrs. J. F. Brown, Jacob Butler, J. W. Caldwell, J. B. Grinnell, C. C. Nourse, Henry O'Connor, John Shane, Wm. M. Stone, and James F. Wilson. Three had taken part in the first national conventions of the party in 1856, Mr. W. Penn Clarke at Pittsburg and Messrs. J. W. Caldwell and R. L. B. Clarke at Philadelphia. Messrs. Reuben Noble, O'Connor and Stone had been the nominees of the Republicans for presidential electors in 1856. Mr. Alvin Saunders had been a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1846; and Messrs. W. Penn Clarke, R. L. B. Clarke, Thomas Seeley, Wm. A. Warren and James F. Wilson had been members of the Constitutional Convention of 1857.

Messrs. A. F. Brown, Hepburn, Nourse and O'Connor and Benjamin Rector had attained local celebrity either as prosecuting or as district attorneys. Mr. Wm. P. Clarke was then reporter for the supreme court. Four of the delegation had occupied the district bench—Judges Hubbard, Rankin, Smyth and Stone. Both Mr. Clarke and Mr. Nourse, though young.



men, had been urged as candidates for the supreme court. Later Messrs. Nourse, Noble and Shane were elected to the district bench and twice Judge Reuben Noble was the nominee of the Democratic party for the supreme court. Judge Wm. Smyth was then a member of the Code Commission. Two of those just mentioned, Messrs. Nourse and O'Connor, became attorney general of Iowa.

Nine of the delegates had had experience in one or both houses of the state Legislature:—L. C. and Reuben Noble, Thompson and Wilson in the lower and Grinnell, McPherson, Rankin, Rusch, Saunders and Wilson in the upper house. Ten were in the Legislature at the time they were chosen:—Blackford, Bowdoin, Caldwell and L. C. Noble in the House and A. F. Brown, McPherson, Rankin, Saunders, Thompson and Wilson in the Senate. Subsequently Messrs. Butler, Kasson and Seeley were elected to the House; Mr. Butler being elected speaker and Mr. Kasson securing the appropriation for the present state capitol. Mr. C. F. Clarkson and Mr. John Shane were elected to the Senate. Mr. Rusch was Lt. Governor at the time and thereby presiding officer of the Senate.

Messrs. Kasson and Seeley were members of a committee appointed by Gov. Lowe to examine into the condition of the public offices of the State and to report: their recommendations presented in 1860 worked a revolution in the methods of accounting. Mr. Wm. Penn Clarke had been nominated for Governor in 1848 by the Abolition party, and he was frequently mentioned for the office later. Judge Stone in 1863 was elected Governor, serving four years: and in 1872 Mr. O'Connor was a leading candidate for the nomination. Messrs. Geo. A. Hawley, M. L. McPherson and John W. Thompson were prominent candidates for the Republican nomination for secretary of state that year, or in 1862.

Nineteen of the thirty-seven delegates and alternates entered the army service during the Civil War, a number attaining high official rank. Messrs. L. C. Noble, Henry O'Connor, Benjamin Rector and N. J. Rusch became Majors; J. W. Caldwell and W. P. Hepburn Lt. Colonels; H. C. Cald-

well, McPherson, Rankin, Shane and Smyth the rank of Colonel; and Wm. M. Stone attained the rank of Bvt. Brigadier General. Majors Reetor and Rusch died at the front.

A third of the delegation had noteworthy careers in the service of the national government either in the administrative branches or on the bench or in Congress. In 1864 President Lincoln appointed Col. H. Clay Caldwell Judge of the Federal District Court for Arkansas, a position in which he steadily increased his fame; and in 1890 President Harrison elevated him to the position of U. S. Judge of the Eighth Circuit, his jurisdiction comprising Arkansas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, North and South Dakota, Wyoming and Colorado.

Mr. O'Connor was appointed solicitor of the State Department at Washington by President Grant and served in that important post continuously under Secretaries Fish, Evarts, Blaine and Frelinghuysen.

Mr. Herbert M. Hoxie became United States Marshal for Iowa under President Lincoln and won great applause for the vigor of his administration. Following the war he entered upon an increasingly successful career in the construction of railroads and in railway administration, being at his death in 1886 the virtual head of the Gould system of roads in the southwest and classed among the foremost railway managers in the country.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Kasson's career in the service of the national administration was notable. He was appointed First Assistant Postmaster-General under President Lincoln. He initiated the first International Postal Commission at Paris in 1863, and represented our government. Later he gained distinction as our Minister to the Courts of Austria and Berlin. He represented our government in the Congo Conference at Berlin and in the Samoan Conference at Washington; and was a member of the Canadian Commission. He closed his career as

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<sup>1</sup>*Harper's Weekly*, XXX, p. 784 (Dec. 4, 1886).

the negotiator of the Treaties of Reciprocity with sundry countries under the McKinley tariff law.

Seven members of the delegation first selected, entered the lower House of Congress—Messrs. Allison of Dubuque, Grinnell of Poweshiek, Hepburn of Marshall, Hubbard of Woodbury, Kasson of Polk, Smyth of Linn and Wilson of Jefferson county. Three other members came near achieving the same distinction. Mr. R. L. B. Clarke of Henry was the Whig nominee for Congress in 1854 and fell but little short of winning the election. In 1866 Mr. M. L. McPherson of Madison was the strong third in a triangular contest for the Republican nomination in the old Fifth district, the prize going to Gen. G. M. Dodge. In 1866 Judge Noble of Clayton parted company with the Republican party over President Johnson and reconstruction, and was Mr. Allison's opponent in the congressional canvass. Mr. C. F. Clarkson came near receiving a nomination for Congress in 1868.

In the crucial days of the war and following, there were few more influential men in the lower House at Washington than Wm. B. Allison, John A. Kasson and James F. Wilson. "The men from Iowa" were both guides and leaders in congressional debates and party caucuses and potent in moulding public opinion.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Wm. B. Allison had not served his third term before Mr. James G. Blaine, himself then about succeeding Thaddeus Stevens as leader of the House, included the young Iowan among the three most influential leaders of Congress.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Tarbell, *The Tariff in Our Times in The American Magazine*, LXIII, 279. "Messrs. Allison, Wilson and Kasson, members of Congress from Iowa, led in the fight against the outbreak of high protection which immediately followed the war."

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*, p. 474. Miss Tarbell relates the following: Discussing the domination of Thaddeus Stevens and the emancipation of the Republican party from his rule on his death in 1868, Mr. James G. Blaine in response to a question, "Whom have you got for leaders?" is reported to have said: "There are three young men coming forward. Allison will be heard from, so will James A. Garfield," and then he paused. "Who is the third?" "I don't see the third," Blaine replied, gazing into the dome."

The great goal of political ambition then as nowadays was membership in the Senate of the United States. In connection with the senatorial elections in 1858 and '60 the names of Henry O'Connor, Wm. Penn Clarke and Judge Smyth were mentioned and urged in the former and those of Mr. Butler, Mr. Kasson and Judge Reuben Noble in the latter election. Senator Grimes regarded Judge Smyth as his most dangerous competitor in 1858. In the seventies and again in the eighties Mr. Kasson was the candidate of a powerful group of the party but the fates did not decide in his favor. Three of the delegation, however, entered the Senate. Alvin Saunders of Henry county was appointed Governor of the Territory of Nebraska in 1861, serving until 1867, and in 1883 he was sent to the Senate from that State, serving one term. James F. Wilson, after his distinguished career in the House of Representatives, became a Senator of Iowa in 1883, and remained so up to his death in 1895. In 1873 Mr. W. B. Allison entered the Upper Chamber, after eight years in the House of Representatives, serving without interruption for almost thirty-six years, a career without duplicate in that noted body. Among its members he became, Senator Hale of Maine asserts, "an exalted and accepted leader",<sup>1</sup> whose solid achievements won from Senator Lodge of Massachusetts the encomium that "for many years he was the nation's 'best senator,' " becoming like Webster "one of the institutions" of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Two of the delegates were at various times widely mentioned in public discussion as candidates for the Presidency. The nomination of Judge H. Clay Caldwell by the national Democratic party was strongly urged in 1896 and 1900; some of his decisions respecting the relations of railroads to their laborers and their relations to the public had made him very popular with the masses as well as with the profession; but he refused to allow his friends to promote him.<sup>3</sup> At the national Republican convention at Chicago in 1888, Senator Al-

<sup>1</sup>*Congressional Record*, Proceedings in the Senate, Feb. 6. 1909.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*The Annals of Iowa* (3d Series) VIII, 267.

lison's name was formally presented and the late Senator Hoar of Massachusetts informs us that "no other person ever came so near the Presidency of the United States and missed it." the contrary disposition of one notable alone controlling the vote of the New York delegation and thwarting his nomination.<sup>1</sup>

(f) *Contemporary Comment on the Conclusions of the Convention.*

The proceedings and conclusions of the convention, as was the case with the call and the preliminaries thereof, elicited comparatively few comments in the party press of the State. Editorial comment is rare. Epistolary or reportorial comment is more frequent. Such papers as *The News* of Boone, *The Hawk-Eye* of Burlington, *The Intelligencer* of Charles City, *The Daily Gazette* of Davenport, *The Gate City* of Keokuk, *The Journal* of Muscatine, *The Courier* of Ottumwa, *The Hamilton Freeman* of Webster City, made no editorial comment. We need not conclude, however, that their respective editors were either ignorant of or indifferent to the work of the convention. The editors of all, save *The Hawk-Eye* and *The Intelligencer*, were delegates and took part in the proceedings. Some of them sent interesting letters back to their readers in which we find what were virtually editorial observations.

Some of the comments upon the boisterous character of the proceedings have been given. Sundry editors pass judgment upon the significance of the proceedings and a few make assertions as to the attitude of the convention and of its national delegates towards national candidates. Altogether they afford us interesting evidence of the contrary and divergent interpretations of the same transactions. Each one saw what his predilections or prejudices inclined him to see. Their expressions are given with but little condensation in what follows.

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<sup>1</sup>G. F. Hoar, *Autobiography of Seventy Years*, I, 410-413.



In the fore part of 1860 the columns of *The Springfield (Mass.) Republican* contained a number of racy letters from "Our Iowa Correspondent." They were the product of the facile pen of Fitz Henry Warren of Burlington. On his return from the convention at Des Moines, where he was chairman of his county's delegation, he wrote the following, dated at Burlington, Jan. 21.

Our state convention for the election of delegates to Chicago was in convulsive throes last Wednesday. As there were over five hundred candidates for the places you can calculate the number in attendance. The representation first proposed was three hundred and thirty, but there being still some disappointed aspirants, the number was made thirty-three. I can give you one negative item of information only—they are *not* for Bates. When people die in this country, they are buried, and though tenderly remembered, are never disinterred for political or other purposes; in which regard we are far behind the refined tastes of our eastern kinsfolk.

My bowels of compassion are strongly moved for the unfortunate seven who may be selected for the cabinet of the Republican president, if, contrary to my expectations, we are to have one. Let them court the protection of granite battlements, mounted with cannon and culverin, ditched and counterscarped, portholed and portcullised. Never since the northern barbarians overran the vine clad hills and valleys of Italy, has there been such an irruption as there will be into Washington with a change of dynasty. Let the prayers of the Christian Church go up in advance for these predestined victims of the universal "give, give," of famished patriotism. We need not waste our supplications on women in the "perils of child birth" and "sick persons and young children," when manhood and mature age are gasping for breath in the suffocation of an office-seeking mob.<sup>1</sup>

Another observer, an Ohioan who happened to be in Des Moines the day of the convention, attended its sessions. He gave *The Cincinnati Gazette* an account of the character of the delegates with a slightly different flavor, observing:

Iowa may be relied upon as one of the firm Republican states. The leading politicians are generally young men of a high order of talent, devoted to principles rather than to men; energetic and en-

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<sup>1</sup>*The Springfield (Mass.) Republican* (wk.) Feb. 4, 1860. The writer is indebted to Mr. Otha Thomas, a graduate student of law in Yale University for the extract.

thusiastic they will arouse the whole State in the coming canvass, to an extent which will result in a Republican majority of at least five thousand votes.<sup>1</sup>

A correspondent of *The Fairfield Ledger*, who signs himself "Vindex" discusses the delegation, its work and the party's prospects in a pointed fashion. As Fairfield was Senator James F. Wilson's home town one is curious whether or not his views are reflected. The letter was penned at Des Moines the day following the convention (Jan. 19.)

The delegation is left uninstructed and will go "perfectly free to regulate their vote in their own way" which I think is entirely proper and right. It cannot be told now who it will be best to select as the representative for the ensuing contest. Whoever he may be I hope he will be a full grown Republican—no weakkneed, limber backed, half and half compromiser. The country and the times demand a thoroughbred Republican and I doubt not that the Chicago convention will meet this demand promptly and with the right kind of a man.

The Republican party has a severe contest before it; but a triumph is certain if the right kind of counsels prevail. Advices flow into this point from all sections of the country and evince a strong and steady growth of Republican sentiment—the truth is that a prudent and firm course at Chicago will bring to our support a host of men who are little suspected of Republican proclivities. I am advised of quite a number of leading and influential Democrats who are waiting for the action of the Republican convention before determining their course in the coming canvass. I know that many of them have, in private, said that they are sick of the Democratic party and its detestable dogmas. They acknowledge that the party is completely sold out to the slave power and insist that they cannot and will not continue to insult their intelligence by trying to apologize for and whitewash the flagrant wrongs perpetrated by their party.<sup>2</sup>

The conspicuous fact in public debate was Slavery. Yet Abolitionism was the *bête noir* of prudent politicians. The convention indulged in no resolutions respecting the vexed question, but it favored two men who were tainted with strong prejudices favorable to the Negro. This phase of the convention's work is adverted to, by *The Indianola Visitor*, whose

<sup>1</sup>*The Weekly Iowa Citizen*, Feb. 8, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*The Fairfield Ledger*, Jan. 27, 1860.

editor, Mr. J. H. Knox, was a Marylander, with an anti-slavery bent but with an aversion for Abolitionists. Writing from Des Moines he says:

You will see by reference to this list [of delegates] that there is just enough of the Brown sympathizing Republicans in the delegation to give it a strong Abolition odor. Grinnell and Clarke are avowed and undeniable Abolitionists; the former having been a bosom friend of the Harper's Ferry insurrectionist up to the moment of his death and would be today loud in praise of his acts were he not afraid that it might possibly be unpopular to openly eulogize treason. When Brown went through his town with a lot of stolen property Mr. Grinnell harbored him and raised money to aid him on his journey to Canada. W. Penn Clarke is known all over the State as an Abolitionist and is the leader of that wing of the party to which he belongs. He is a man of ability—one who has worked his own passage through life from the position of a tramping journeyman printer to that of a prominent politician and one of the ablest members of the bar in the State. With the aid of Grinnell, Clarke will make the Iowa delegation show the ebony at Chicago. I do not know whom the majority of the delegation are in favor of for President, nor do I think they can consistently decide in favor of any Republican. The call for the national convention is not for a Republican convention but for one composed of delegates from every party opposed to the policy of James Buchanan. Under the call Free Lovers, Garrisonites and Woman's Rights parties, all have a perfect right to send their delegates to the convention and there put forth their candidate for nomination.<sup>1</sup>

Similar, but much less sympathetic sentiments were expressed by Mr. Stilson Hutchins, who had then but recently assumed editorial control of the *Iowa State Journal*, the organ of the Democrats at the capital city. Under the caption "'Union Men' of the North" he made (Jan. 21) the following comments on some of the notables honored by the convention:

Wm. Penn Clarke, one of John Brown's Iowa correspondents when that "martyr" was at Harper's Ferry, perfecting his "unwise and censurable scheme," heads the list of delegates to represent the great Republican States rights party at Chicago.

J. B. Grinnell, as pure an Abolitionist as today treads Massachusetts soil—and the man who, in the pulpit of the Congregational

<sup>1</sup>*The Indianola Visitor*, Jan. 28, 1860.

church in the town of Grinnell, in Poweshiek county, stood by the side of John Brown, then reeking with the blood of his murdered victims, and appealed to the audience to subscribe liberally to aid him on his way, is a co-delegate.

Jacob Butler, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Convention of which Clarke and Grinnell are the representatives, attended as a delegate a Disunion Abolition Convention at Chicago last summer, and made, of all members, the most infamous disunion speech. These are the representatives of the "conservative" spirit of the country, and the candidates they put in nomination, Webster and Clay Whigs will feel proud to support.

One of the obstreperous facts in the political field in 1860 was the presence of the foreign voter and his belligerent disposition in all matters closely affecting his welfare. Both parties studiously avoided irritating the foreign born; but the latter's experience with Know-Nothingism was still a vivid memory and we see some signs of their sensitiveness respecting their treatment in the comments of the press. The chief fact in the proceedings of the convention as Mr. F. M. Zieback, editor of the *Sioux City Register*, the organ of the Democratic party in the northwest part of the State saw it, was the clash of the elements in respect of slavery and the "foreigners." He thus characterized the proceedings:

There were three different elements in the Convention, viz.: The Irrepressible Brown Republicans who favored Seward; the Germans who favored a Michigan gentleman, and the dark lantern party who favored Bates. They had a stormy time, as might be expected.<sup>1</sup>

In the columns of *The Pella Gazette* we find some interesting observations upon the makeup of the delegation that indicate how real to the foreign born was the fear of nativistic antagonism and how welcome were definite signs of its abatement. Mr. Scholte observed:

If our readers look over the list of delegates they will perceive that not only the different parts of the State are represented in the delegation, but also that several naturalized citizens are among the delegates. The last feature is certainly a renewed and indubitable proof that there is no proscription of foreign birth. That part of the population of Iowa has a fair proportion in the representation

<sup>1</sup>*The Sioux City Register*, Jan. 28, 1860.

of our State in the national convention for the purpose of nominating candidates for President and Vice-President of the United States. We call attention to that particular feature because the Democratic leaders are continually trying to influence foreign born citizens by the unwarranted assertion that the Republican party is under the control of the party generally known as the Know-Nothing or Native American.

We do not object to a native American having more sympathy with the native born—that is natural—and exists among Democrats as well as Republicans; but when that natural sympathy degenerates into exclusion and proscription of citizens of foreign birth it ought to be denounced and resisted. We are therefore well pleased to see the frequent refutation of that slander by the Republican party in the election of foreign born citizens.<sup>1</sup>

A few surmises are ventured as to the attitude of the delegation selected for Chicago towards the candidates for the Presidency. Some are direct and positive, some are balanced with alternatives. They indicate the inclinations of the writers as much as they do their cool judgment. The correspondent of *The Vinton Eagle*, presumably Senator Drummond, wrote, under date of Jan. 23:

The "Irrepressibles" are well represented on the delegation, a majority being of that faith. But it makes no difference about that in this State. Iowa is sure to give her vote to the Chicago nominee whoever he may be, and the general impression here is that Cameron will be the man.<sup>2</sup>

On January 20 a correspondent wrote *The Keosauqua Republican* from Des Moines:

The Convention sent 33 delegates to Chicago to cast 8 votes. Many of the delegates are supposed to be Seward men, though most of them declared themselves not committed and determined to be influenced in their choice only by considerations of public good and availability. No doubt a large portion of the delegation will go for Seward if they believe from the sentiment and lights developed at Chicago that he can be elected. Some of the delegates undoubtedly have a decided preference for some more conservative man, or at least some one who is regarded by the people as a more conservative man.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*The Pella Gazette*, Jan. 25, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*The Vinton Eagle*, Jan. 31, 1860.

<sup>3</sup>*The Keosauqua Republican*, Jan. 27, 1860.



About the same date the correspondent of *The Dubuque Times*, presumably Mr. Frank W. Palmer, penned the following:

Some of the delegates expressed their unalterable determination to cast their votes and use all honorable means within their power to secure the nomination and election of the "man of the hour" whose past career, unclouded and unspotted, shall be deemed a sufficient guarantee of his future action—a true and unfaltering exponent of the principles of the Republican party<sup>1</sup>

One might conclude that Gov. Seward was in the mind of those delegates with "unalterable determination", but the conclusion is not necessary.

A correspondent of *The Gate City* wrote the following dated at Des Moines, Jan. 21:

The delegates were uninstructed, which was right. All the proposed candidates have friends among them, though we presume no one has a majority. We think Lincoln and Cameron have more friends, very decidedly, than any other two.<sup>2</sup>

The same sentiment was expressed by the veteran. John Teesdale, in terms that summarize many of his own editorial observations in *The Citizen* during the year preceding:

The delegates go uncommitted; as they should do. No attempt was made to pack the delegation for any aspirant to the Presidency. Seward, Chase, McLean, Bates, Lincoln, Cameron, and other distinguished statesmen, have their friends in the delegation. But when it is fairly ascertained who is the man to bear aloft the Republican banner, and lead the free masses to victory, Iowa will be found ready to declare her preference.<sup>3</sup>

A dispatch to the *Chicago Press and Tribune*, printed Jan. 21, declared that the delegates from Iowa were in favor of the nomination of Mr. Seward. Later reports contradicted the first advices. An editorial rectifying first comments concluded with the observation "The spirit of the Iowa Republicans was and is, to go for the man who seems likeliest to be elected when the national convention meets, provided al-

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted in *The Lyons Weekly Mirror*, Jan. 26, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*The Gate City*, Jan. 26, 1860.

<sup>3</sup>*The Daily Iowa State Register*, Jan. 20, 1860.

ways that he is a staunch Republican with a backbone perfectly straight.' This sentiment of *The Press* elicited the following from Mr. Add H. Sanders:

*The Press* is right. The Iowa delegation will enter the Republican national convention as every other delegation should do, unpledged to any man and thus in a position to calmly make their choice after the claims and strength of the different candidates for nomination are thoroughly investigated, with the sole object before them of the success of the Republican party above and beyond any particular individual's personal elevation. Whoever is nominated of those whose names have been prominently mentioned in connection with the position, our delegation may safely promise the people and the party the electoral vote of Iowa. The people will redeem this promise most gloriously. No State in the Union is more thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of true Republicanism than Iowa.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. John Mahin noting the first dispatch or a similar report referred to above wrote *The Muscatine Daily Journal* denying its authenticity and saying:

We judge from conversation with many of the delegates and from the hearty applause which greeted the mention of Mr. Seward's name by the gentlemen who addressed the convention, that he is the first choice of the majority of the Republicans of the State; but the disposition appeared unanimous to acquiesce in the action of the national convention.<sup>2</sup>

The extract from the *Press and Tribune* quoted above was reprinted in *Der Demokrat* also of Davenport with comment in agreement, concluding with the observation: ". . . at present the views of the several delegates in regard to the president to be nominated are still widely diverging."<sup>3</sup>

Another paper of Chicago, the *Journal*, announced that "the delegates . . . it is understood, favor the nomination of Mr. Seward for the Presidency." Commenting on this statement, Mr. Clark Dunham said:

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<sup>1</sup>*The Davenport Daily Gazette*, Jan. 27, 1860.

<sup>2</sup>*The Muscatine Daily Journal*, Jan. 23, 1860.

<sup>3</sup>*Der Demokrat*, Jan. 24, 1860. The writer is indebted to Mr. Harry E. Downer and Dr. August P. Richter of Davenport for the citations from *The Daily Gazette* and *Der Demokrat* relative to the reports and comments in *The Press and Tribune* of Chicago.

Our Chicago contemporary has sources of information which are inaccessible to us. So far as we can learn our delegation is not committed to *any* candidate, the sentiment of the convention was, that our representatives shall consult and co-operate with those from Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Indiana. We think we may venture to say, that whoever is the strongest in these states will be the one for whom our vote will be thrown.<sup>1</sup>

So far as the writer can discover no criticism of the convention because of its action or non-action in the matter of instructions, or in respect of the makeup of the delegation, or the alleged or presumed preferences of the delegates for candidates, was made by any Republican editor in Iowa. None indicated any positive or insistent preferences. Each and all seem to assume and to presume that success at the polls in the coming election was the paramount consideration. The ambitions of candidates or the claims of their friends or promoters and the demands of this or that state or section for "recognition" were minor matters and negligible.

(g) *Commentary and Conclusion.*

However one may regard the character of the delegates to the Republican state convention that assembled in Sherman's Hall on Wednesday afternoon, January 18, 1860; whatever conclusion is tenable as to the *motif* impelling the delegates in the proceedings; and be one's opinion such as it may as to the character or careers of the delegates selected by the convention to represent its wishes and to determine for its members on the proper course at Chicago—several conclusions are justified by the foregoing exhibits.

If a "machine" controlled in the preliminaries of the convention at Des Moines, that is in the caucuses and conventions in the cities and country districts in the selection of the county delegates, the managers of the machine picked and sent to Des Moines some of the best ability and finest character to be found in the Republican party in Iowa at the time of its maximum vigor and virtue. Its delegates thoroughly represented not only the vitality of the party, but the general average of Iowa's citizenship.

<sup>1</sup> See *Daily Hawk-Eye*, Jan. 25, 1860.

If "politics" controlled in the proceedings of the convention at Des Moines it was the natural and necessary result of the collision of contrary interests in the State whose representatives in the nature of the case sought position and power to protect and further those interests. The conclusion of their proceedings—their negation of instructions or of the unit rule—in the light of the conditions then manifest and in the judgment of those who have studied them in the lights and shades of subsequent events, was the very essence of common sense as well as the very substance of political wisdom.

If the delegates selected by Iowa's Republicans on January 18, 1860, to represent them in the celebrated convention at Chicago were "politicians" and "wire-pullers" they were certainly excellent samples of the species—and a sort that it would be well if their numbers and kind would increase and multiply.

The attitude of the delegates in Sherman's Hall towards national issues and the several candidates then mentioned and urged upon their consideration completely represented the dominant wish of the rank and file of the party throughout the State as it was indicated in their party press during the year preceding. Prejudices relative to sundry moot points that aroused animosity and alienated allies and personal preferences for particular candidates were deliberately checked, in order that there might result an efficient harmony on matters of universal interest among the opposition to the Administration in control at Washington.

Finally the name of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois seems to have been as much in the minds and in the calculations of the delegates and leaders at Des Moines, as were the names of Banks or Bates or Cameron or Chase or Fessenden or McLean or Wade—and possibly—or Seward.







